

TALKING ANIMALS

by

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With a Motor Truck in West Africa,

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Illustrations by

With a Foreword by
Charles D. Mearns

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JAMES A. POSTER

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PREFACE

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MOST children who are attending school have visited a museum. There they have seen many objects that have been brought home from far off countries. Some years ago when leader of the Frederick H. Rawson-Field Museum Expedition to West Africa, I traveled in Angola and Nigeria. The journey led sometimes across sandy plains, or through dense forests, or again in open country with grass-covered hills and a few trees.

The things brought home are now safely housed in Chicago Natural History Museum (formerly Field Museum). Here there are wood-carvings, ivory, metal work, spears, bows and arrows, pottery, and baskets. These objects were collected by traveling ten thousand miles in West Africa.

I spent many nights in native villages and by camp fires listening to stories told by Negroes. Some of these tales were published in a scientific book (Ethnology of the Ovimbundu, Chicago Natural History Museum). I am grateful to the Museum for permission to tell the narratives more simply for the amusement of children who visit this wonderful building.

WILFRID D. HAMBLBY

Chicago

1949

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INTRODUCTION

WHY THE STORIES ARE TOLD

CHILDREN who are accustomed to many pleasures and amusements will perhaps find it difficult to understand why Negro boys and girls, also men and women, find so much entertainment in simple stories.

In America and Europe children read beautifully illustrated books; they also have gay parties and motion pictures. The shop windows are filled with toys, games, and puzzles of all kinds. But how different is life for Negro children of the African forests.

At an early age Negro children help their parents, for there are millions who have no opportunity to attend school. Little girls work on the land with their mothers who hoe the ground and plant the corn, yams, and peanuts. Then there is fire wood to gather, and when quite young, girls learn to make pottery and to weave baskets.

Boys watch their elders at the task of wood carving, dressing hides to make leather, or forging iron into knives, ax-heads, and spears. Bows and arrows have to be made, and each boy is anxious to accompany the men on their expeditions of hunting, fishing, and gathering honey.

This does not mean that Negro children have no amusements. Girls often make dolls from roughly shaped pieces of wood, and cloth is sometimes wrapped round a corn cob to make a doll of which the young nurse is quite proud.

Negroes are most happy when dancing, and at an early age, almost before they can walk steadily, children sway their bodies and move their limbs to the rhythm of music, for almost every evening the drums are heard. Many games are played, and it is a common sight to see little boys acting as hunters, or small girls keeping house. For boys there are games of shooting arrows at a sweet potato which is rolled along the ground and both boys and girls join in many a round game.

When tired of more active play, the children tell stories and ask riddles. To make a living, people have to spend long days in the open air, tilling the fields, hunting, fishing, and collecting wild produce such as fruits and honey. Sometimes all the women and children from a village search diligently for caterpillars for making soup.

Out in the open the people see many animals and they are quick to notice anything amusing about them. The cries of all the creatures are heard both by

day and by night, so it is not surprising that animals are thought to carry on a conversation. In fact, birds, beasts, and reptiles are regarded as having the thoughts and feelings of human beings. Some animals are said to be deceitful, while others are brave and generous.

In this way imagination plays round animals and their habits. Curiosity is aroused, and children begin to ask why the tortoise has a rough shell, why the bat flies by night, and why the antelope has a long neck. A hunter likes to gather boys around him; he takes them with him collecting honey in the woods and amuses them with tales of animals.

So it happens that stories are handed down by word of mouth from parents to children. There are very few Negroes who can write. Negro carriers in caravans used to take the tales to many parts of Africa so that the same, or nearly the same stories, are heard now in tribes living hundreds of miles apart.

The tales are not always told just for amusement. Some of the stories pretend to explain the appearance and the habits of animals, and in some of the fables a lesson is taught. The Hare is so cunning that he begins to think that he can deceive all the other creatures, but at last he gets into serious trouble. Tortoise is despised and laughed at because he is so slow, yet he proves to be a match for larger animals.

Let us try to picture the scenes among which these tales are told.

I

WHO TELLS THESE STORIES?

The first of these is the fact that the
author of the book is a man of letters
and a man of letters is a man who
is not content with the ordinary
run of things.

Secondly, the author is a man of letters
and a man of letters is a man who
is not content with the ordinary
run of things.

Thirdly, the author is a man of letters
and a man of letters is a man who
is not content with the ordinary
run of things.

Fourthly, the author is a man of letters
and a man of letters is a man who
is not content with the ordinary
run of things.

WHO TELLS THESE THINGS?



I

WHO TELLS THESE STORIES?

NIGHT is advancing rapidly over a West African landscape. Already the sun has dipped below the sky line, leaving only a few bright streaks of red and yellow among tiny clouds that gather round the setting sun.

Hunters are hastening home fearful of the gloom of hills and forests. One of the travelers breaks a handful of earth from the top of an anthill and places it in the fork of a branch, muttering as he does so "O sun wait for me a little bit." In the village thin curls of smoke are rising from the newly kindled fires. All day long the ashes have smouldered between the hearth stones, but now they are puffed into a blaze and tended by children anxious for their evening meal. Hawks are winging their way homeward, while owls are just waking and getting ready for an attack on the rats and other small animals now venturing from their holes. From the rocky hillsides comes the cry of the hyena and the jackal.



Tired women arriving from the fields where they have worked all day unfasten their babies from their backs and lay them down. From the baskets sweet potatoes are taken and added to water which is boiling in the earthen pots. One woman is stirring corn meal into the water to which she also adds a handful of beans, then over the top a few leaves are placed to keep in the steam.

The hungry men and boys have gathered in the men's house in the middle of the village where the juniors are busy pushing logs forward into the fire, and around the blaze are seated men of all ages. There are old greyheaded men who recall the days of witchcraft, warfare and slavery, also young men who like to hear of the freedom enjoyed before the White Man came. From the huts women saunter carrying food to their husbands with whom they are not allowed to have the evening meal.

For half an hour there is silence, broken only by a few sounds which clearly show that the men and boys are enjoying their corn mush and sweet potatoes. But suddenly there breaks out a buzz of conversation; the day's hunting, the death of a cow, the arrival of a White Man, are all subjects of excited talk in which the little boys may never join, though they listen eagerly.

Presently one of the older men begins a story. If a hunter, he likes to tell of the ways of animals, for every day he wanders far and wide setting traps and visiting those he baited the previous day. He knows the animals large and small, is able to find their hiding places, watches their cunning tricks for deceiving each other, and laughs at their funny ways of hopping, jumping, or flying. No wonder that the old hunter knows many good stories of beasts as large as the elephant and as small as the mouse. Some of the stories are told just to raise a laugh, and this they readily do because the story teller always imitates the movements and cries of the creatures who are the subjects of his story. I have seen a funny little man, who himself was rather like a monkey, acting in imitation of a baboon and keeping his friends in roars of laughter with a sing-song tale.

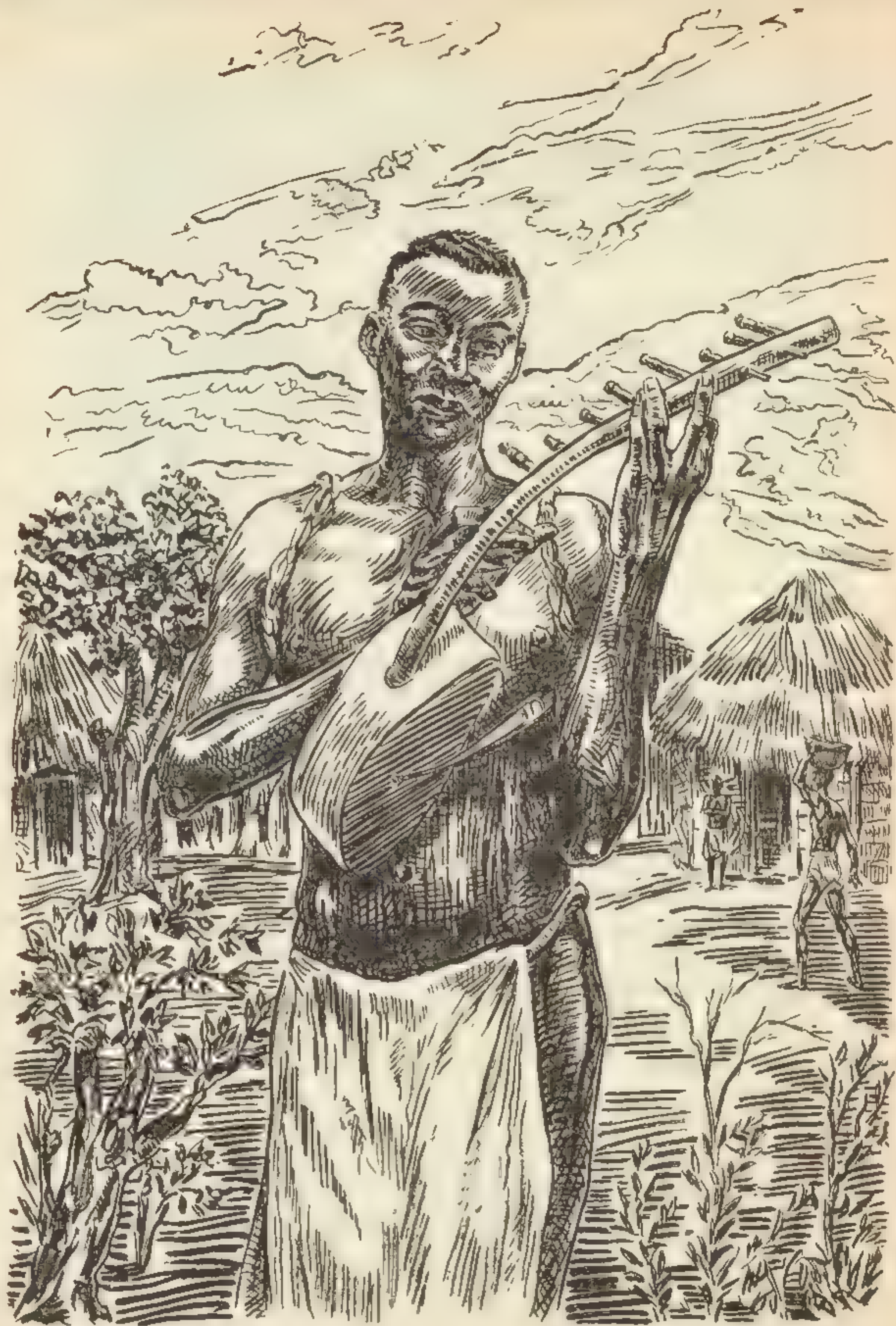
The fires die down, sleeping mats are spread in the huts, and all is quiet for the night. With the first streaks of dawn mats and blankets are thrown aside. Once more the fire is puffed into a blaze and the logs pushed forward. There is a meal, perhaps a very small one in the early morning, and the work of the day begins. Workers set off for the fields carrying a few brands of glowing wood, there to kindle a fire which serves till the sun gets higher. On the rocks women are soon busy pounding corn. Thud! Thud! go the heavy wooden pestles. Gradually the sun's rays become warmer, so that clothing is thrown aside, then the women look happier, begin to sing, or someone asks a riddle. "Who lies on his

side all day and does no work?" and the answer is a pumpkin. After that comes all the village gossip; somebody is ill; it is said that some woman has stolen two chickens; the chief is going on a long journey. The thumping of the pestles stops again and a story is told of the hare who started building a house which was seen at night by the hyena who added something to it. Next day the hare thought that a good fairy had helped him so gladly continued the task — but I must tell that story later, not now.

In South Africa there are many caves in the hills, and if we look carefully at the walls, paintings made with colored earth will be seen. Here is a leopard jumping on the back of an antelope, and there is an elephant pursued by a hunter who has already fired one of his arrows or thrown his spear. Some of these paintings are very old, how old nobody can say, but some have been done recently by men who live entirely by hunting. Every day the little bands of hunters set out, so it is not surprising that they know everything about the animals. Then comes the idle hour after the evening meal, and no doubt paintings of animals were made to pass the time. The hunter would paint and as he did so made up stories about the scene he drew.

Some African natives are great travelers, for not only do they go far away to hunt, but traders cover hundreds of miles, and what an exchange of stories goes on! The wanderers pass on stories to those with whom they spend the night, then of course they hear a few new tales in return, and these are brought back to their own homes. No wonder that the same tales are told in many parts of Africa. The story of the tug-of-war between the elephant and the hippopotamus is told in places thousands of miles apart.

Let us join the people round their fires, to hear without being seen. We will go with the women to wash clothes at the river, to work in the fields, and to pound corn on the rocks. We must not forget to listen to the children as they sit in the shade, tired of playing in the heat of the day. If we do these things perhaps a wonderful story book will be given to us.



II

SOME PUZZLING QUESTIONS



II

SOME PUZZLING QUESTIONS

WHY DOES HYENA LIMP?

THE Hyena is a strong animal, especially in the neck and shoulders. I remember having a donkey carried off by one of them, and the poor beast was dragged away to the hills, a distance of several miles. But although the Hyena has powerful jaws, and strong muscles in his front legs, his back slopes toward the haunches, so he walks as if lame, or at least very tired.

It so happened, that while two women were coiling wet clay into the shape of cooking pots, their children were making toy animals from the fragments of clay left over.

While the children were chattering and each was holding up her work to be admired one of the mothers said, "The Hyena you made is not like the real animal, his back legs should be shorter than the front."

All the children wanted to know why this was so. Then when silence fell on the little group the mother told them that after Hyena and Squirrel had become friends the former asked his companion to bring some food.

The willing squirrel searched for a time, then offered a few nuts with a polite, "You will find these very nice."

Hyena rudely replied, "I want something better than that. I live on meat, but I don't mind eating honey."

Most obligingly Squirrel climbed a tree and with only short delay returned carrying stolen honey from a hive.

"Perhaps this will suit your taste?" he politely asked Hyena.

With a growl that was intended for thanks the greedy Hyena sat down and enjoyed the honey comb.

Suddenly he was interrupted by Eagle, who asked, "Please give me a morsel?"

"Not I," said Hyena discourteously.

"Then, as you are a small Hyena, I will carry you in my talons to the eaglets," retorted the Eagle, and without more talking he seized Hyena and flew aloft.

Hyena struggled so fiercely that he freed himself from the grip of Eagle, but only to suffer a fall that injured his hind legs, and so they remain to this day.

WHY NIGHT-JAR CANNOT BE SEEN AT NIGHT

WHEN driving in an automobile along African roads—for there are roads as well as jungle—birds called Night-jars rise very suddenly from almost under the front wheels. The Night jar, who flies only after dark, keeps his mouth open to catch insects, but sometimes, if tired, he lies down in the dust of the road and keeps close to the ground. In America there is a bird like the Night-jar which is called Whip-poor-will.

I remember two unlucky Night-jars which met their death by flying against the glass wind screen of my automobile. On another occasion a Night-jar, attracted by the bright lights of the motor car, crashed into the wind-screen without being killed. He was only stunned by the blow. For several hours I carried the bird in my pocket, until at last he flew away when fully recovered.

The natives tell a story which is supposed to explain why the Night-jar cannot be seen at night. He is certainly well concealed by his color. A long time ago, Night-jar asked Guinea Fowl, who is a speckled gray bird about the size of a hen, what he should do in order to become a great chief.

"Take this magic medicine and pour it on the ground," directed Guinea Fowl. "Presently there will spring up a hut, and before long many people will come to serve you as their chief."

Guinea Fowl then explained that Night-jar must always treat the people kindly. If he failed to do so the hut and the people would disappear.

Night-jar did exactly as he had been told. Then, to his great surprise, a hut for him to live in grew up out of the ground. Day by day people came to serve him until his name became famous for many miles around. People called him their chief, and there were always servants who would work in his fields. Up to this time Night jar remembered the caution of Guinea Fowl who said, "You must always treat your people kindly." But one day Night-jar shouted angrily at a few children who were digging up roots to eat.

The caution of Guinea Fowl came to mind, but alas, too late to save the situation. The beautiful hut disappeared and the people who had served so faithfully went away. Night-jar was no longer a chief.

In great distress he ran to Guinea Fowl asking that he might be given another chance to rule as chief.

Although Guinea Fowl would not listen to this request he gave Night-jar some medicine to make him dark in color, for, said Guinea Fowl, "You will now have to hide from your subjects who may return to kill you."



WHY ANTELOPE HAS A LONG NECK

THREE Negro women were working very hard under the blaze of a West African sun. Before evening they had to pound corn for the supper of their hungry husbands who were away hunting in the forest.

At last one of them said, "I am so tired, I really must sit down, for I can work with this heavy pounder no longer."

"Very well," said the others. "Sit on the ground and tell us a story which will make us forget our work." Just then an antelope ran across the village path, and at once the story teller said, "Let me tell you why the antelope has a long thin neck."

Tortoise appears to be dull and sleepy, but he is fond of a joke. One day he said to Antelope while they were having a chat together, "What fun it would be if you and I ran a race." Antelope burst into laughter as he replied, "How foolish you would look trying to run quickly on your short legs." But Tortoise was not downhearted, he just wagged his head from side to side, while a clever plan came into his little brain. The two animals then went out together and marked out a race course seven hundred yards long.

In the night Tortoise visited the race course, taking with him seven of his brothers and sisters. They were exactly like him in size and had the same markings on their shells. He placed one every hundred yards along the course, saying, "When Antelope arrives here ask him, 'where have you been? I have been here a long time.'" When the race began Antelope bounded away never suspecting any trick, and very quickly he covered the first hundred yards. Imagine his surprise when stooping down to drink, he saw a Tortoise who said with a laugh, "Where have you been? I have been here a long time." Antelope felt that he must run much faster, so stretching his long legs he went like the wind for the next hundred yards. He then bent down to nibble the grass.



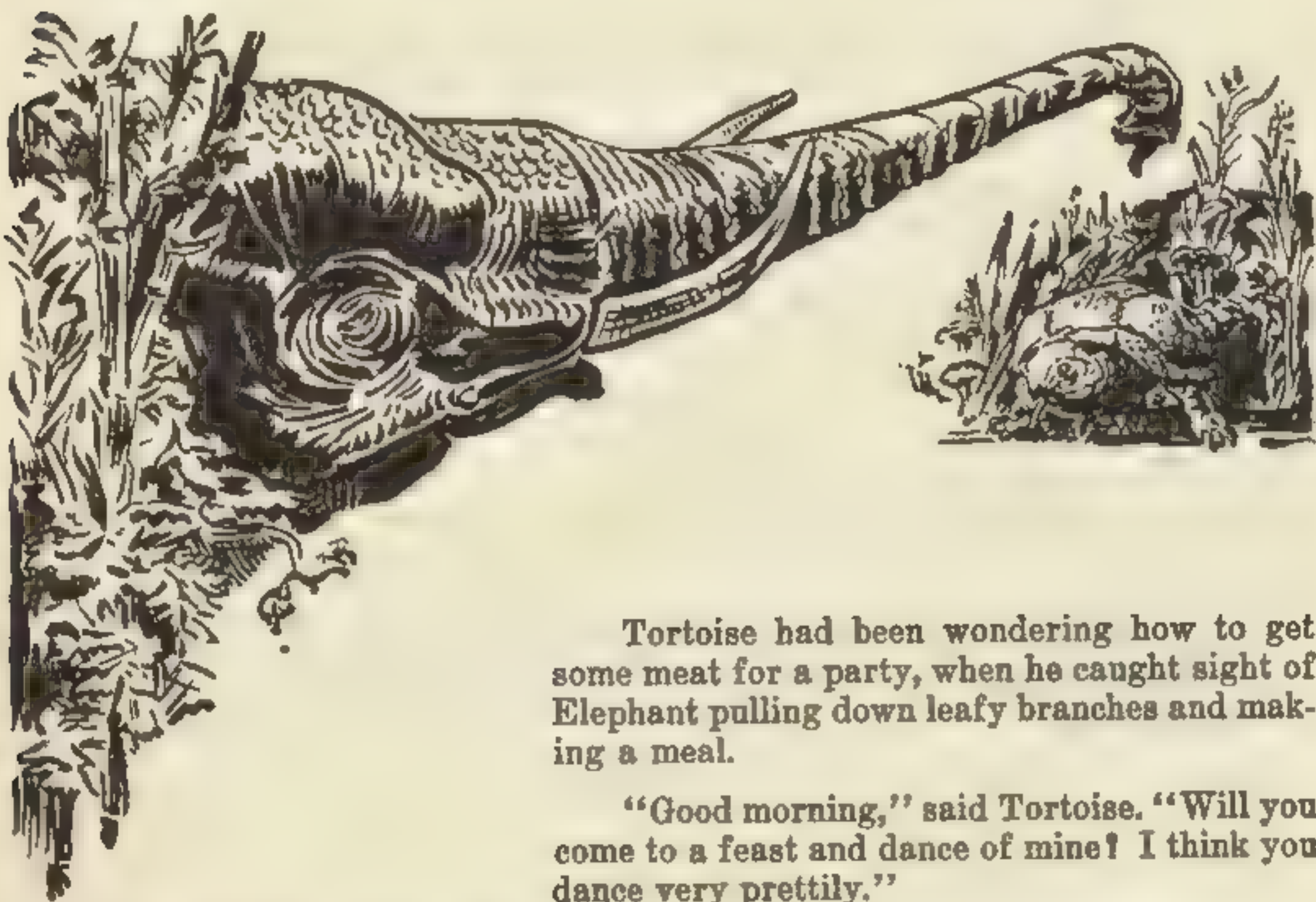
No sooner had he nipped off a juicy mouthful than a little voice said, "Where have you been? I have been waiting here a long time." Antelope began to be thoroughly alarmed, feeling sure that he would lose the race. He hastened away along the course, but to his surprise the same thing happened every time he stopped. At last, thoroughly tired, Antelope reached the end of the race track, only to find Tortoise peeping out of his shell as if looking for someone. "Oh, here you are at last," said Tortoise to Antelope, who was too short of breath to reply.

Antelope walked away feeling very ashamed of himself, for he remembered how rude he had been to Tortoise. In fact, the loser was so sad that he decided to take his own life. Accordingly he placed his head in the forked branch of a tree and began to stretch his neck. At that very moment the deep growl of a leopard was heard, and the terrified Antelope thought only of saving himself. Quickly he wrenched himself free and escaped, but his neck was stretched so far that it never became short again.



HOW TORTOISE GOT HIS ROUGH SHELL

AN OLD WOMAN was busy making some sweet beer that even children can drink and enjoy. She had crushed the corn and allowed it to stand in water, then she added a few mashed sweet-potatoes and placed the pot on a slow fire. Nothing remained to be done except to stir the beer gently, and as the children helped her by doing this in turns she rested and told them a story. For a moment she couldn't think of a tale, but presently she noticed a boy who was wearing a small tortoise shell on a string round his neck, and this gave her an idea.



Tortoise had been wondering how to get some meat for a party, when he caught sight of Elephant pulling down leafy branches and making a meal.

"Good morning," said Tortoise. "Will you come to a feast and dance of mine? I think you dance very prettily."

That evening Tortoise tied some seed pods round the feet of Elephant so that they would rattle. Tortoise then made a long rope to which several bells were attached.

"Let me fasten this to your neck," he suggested, and Elephant, who was flattered by this attention, said "very well, do as you wish." Then Tortoise made fast the other end of the rope to a strong tree.

Hare came running by, and called to Elephant:

"You're big but silly. The animals are going to eat you."

Elephant said, "Oh no, I'm here to dance."

Presently Elephant became alarmed when this story was repeated, but exerting his great strength he broke the rope; ran to the forest, and thought of a plan of revenge while walking to the home of Tortoise.

Because Tortoise was still away at the feast, Elephant was asked to call again next day. When Tortoise returned home he saw that Elephant had been near his house. No one could mistake those great footprints.

"He has been looking for me," thought Tortoise, and spent a very sleepless night.

In the morning Tortoise dug a hole, hid himself, and asked his wife to place a stone over him. He then felt a little happier, but looked out nervously from time to time wondering whether Elephant would call again. After a few hours of great anxiety there came a sound of some heavy animal pressing its way through the bushes, and there stood Elephant flapping his ears and swinging his trunk. Tortoise was trembling with fright and making himself as small as possible under the stone.

Mrs. Tortoise went on stirring food in the cooking pot, but looked up when Elephant spoke to her.

"Is your husband at home?" asked Elephant roughly.

"No," replied Mrs. Tortoise, "I have not seen him since yesterday when he went to the feast."

Elephant knew that this was not true, but he could not see Tortoise anywhere although he looked into the hut and peered here and there.

Although Elephant, like all his relatives, has bad eyesight, he has a keen sense of smell. He felt sure there was an odor of Tortoise coming from under the stone. Drawing a little nearer, he saw the stone move slightly and knew that Tortoise was hiding underneath. With a slow stride Elephant advanced, placed his foot on the stone, and pressed it down, then he walked off.

Mrs. Tortoise ran to the rescue, took away the stone, and helped Tortoise out of the hole. For a long time it was uncertain whether Tortoise would live or die. Gradually he recovered, but to this day his shell bears the marks of the severe crushing.

WHY CONEY LIVES AMONG THE ROCKS

IN SEVERAL parts of East Africa, and in the south as well, there lives a small rabbit-like animal named Coney who runs about among the rocks. He is extremely shy, and is perhaps ashamed of the fact that he has no tail.

The Zulu are proud of their cloaks made from the soft skins of coneys. Some people call the animals rock-rabbits. Yet they are not really rabbits but belong to the hoofed animals, though only small traces of hooves can be found on their feet.

Some boys who had driven their cattle to a salt-lick, for animals must have salt to keep them healthy, sat in the shade of a large rock on which several coneys were playing. For a time the boys watched the animals foraging about, darting into crevices and out again.

One of the boys said "It's a queer thing that Coney has no tail," and at once one of his friends said "A man told me a story about that."

The story goes that at one time Squirrel lent his beautiful tail to Coney, who promised faithfully that he would return it in seven days. The relatives of Squirrel laughed at him, saying:

"Coney will never return your tail. It is lost forever."

As for Coney, he visited his friends and excited their envy by running about to display his tail as much as possible.

The days passed so rapidly that Coney did not remember his promise about returning the tail. Meanwhile Squirrel became very anxious, and he was made unhappy by the jibes of his friends.

"Did you really think that Coney would bring back your tail?" they asked mockingly.

At last Squirrel made up his mind to visit Coney, and after a long journey he arrived at the place where Coney was showing off his tail to some friends. Then the quarrel began. Coney became very angry when his relatives said "It's not your tail. Squirrel lent it to you."

Coney denied that he had borrowed the tail. Then Squirrel, seeing that talking was useless, snatched the tail and took it up a tree.

Coney had been so used to boasting about his tail that he felt he could no longer face his relatives without it. He was also ashamed of the way in which he had treated Squirrel. So he ran off to live a quiet life among the rocks of the hillsides.



HOW BABOON LOST HIS TAIL

SOME monkeys have long tails; in fact, the South American monkeys use their tails for hanging from the branches of trees, but African monkeys do not do this. The Baboon has no tail, and if he had, it would be rather in the way since he lives on rugged hillsides, where the trees, if any, are small. If there is an alarm the small Baboons jump on their mothers' backs and ride away like little jockeys.

Two women, who were tired of planting tobacco seedlings in a mound in the middle of their corn field, sat down to rest in the shade of a tree. Behind them were high rocky hills where Baboons climbed from one ledge of rock to another regardless of the precipices beneath them. A fall would have meant certain death. In front and not far away were a few busy Fish Eagles, searching the shallow pools of the dry river bed for stranded fish.

One of the women, the older of the two, had watched the animals for so many years that they seemed to be like human beings to her; she knew all their adventures, and told her friend a story:

Tortoise made friends with Eagle so fed him well and entertained him. Eagle said "You must come to visit me."

"That will be difficult, impossible I think, since you live on the top of a high hill, and my legs are short." But Eagle soon saw a way out of the difficulty. He placed Tortoise in a bag, tied the bag to his own leg, and soared in the air.

After dinner, Eagle said, "You have enjoyed the fish so much that perhaps you would like to take some home."

"Indeed I would," replied Tortoise, "but I don't know how to carry the bag." Again Eagle made a useful suggestion.

"I'll tie the bag to your leg," he offered.

After this had been done Eagle carried Tortoise to the bottom of the hill, said goodbye to him, and left him to crawl home with the bag of fish attached to his leg, and trailing behind on a string.

All went well until Baboon picked up the fish. "That's mine," snapped Tortoise angrily.

But Baboon took no notice of the order, and after unfastening the bag from the string made off at a quick pace.

Tortoise is such a slow walker that he could not possibly catch Baboon, who was soon out of sight in the rocky hills. Tortoise tried to persuade Elephant to help him because Elephant, on account of his size and strength, was the judge for all animals. Unfortunately Elephant decided that a bag which was trailing so far behind did not really belong to Tortoise so there was nothing to do but plan revenge.

Tortoise went to a place where Baboon played, dug a deep hole, then hid himself under a stone. For a long time Tortoise had to lie still until Baboon took a seat near the stone. Then he seized the long tail and refused to let go.

"Let go! That is mine," screamed Baboon.

"Oh no," said Tortoise, "I found it trailing on the ground behind you."

Just then Elephant came slowly by, flapping his ears and waving his trunk from side to side. Baboon explained why Tortoise was holding on to his tail, but Elephant, remembering the bag of fish, decided that the tail belonged to Tortoise because it was trailing so far behind. So Tortoise nipped off the tail to punish Baboon for stealing the fish.



III

THE QUEST FOR HONEY

III

THE QUEST FOR HONEY

STOLEN HONEY

STEALING honey is a serious theft, for although the bees are wild in the forest, each honey gatherer has his own hives which he knows quite well. A man who steals honey from the hive of another person has to pay a fine, or he may be flogged. The storyteller had this in mind when he told the tale of the Wasp, the Spider, and the Rat.

These animals were on their way home, weary and unsuccessful in their quest for honey. They were made still more unhappy by the fact that Hyena said he had found several honeycombs, and he was foolish enough to say where they were hidden in the forest.

Said Spider, "Let us steal Hyena's honey."

So all decided to search the forest during the night to locate the places Hyena had mentioned.

While sitting in his cave Hyena was thinking over the events of the day, and the more he thought the more certain he felt that the animals who had been so friendly were really false to him.

He became so restless that he set off on his night prowls much earlier than usual, and had not gone far when he noticed a fire flickering in the forest.

"Just as I thought," he said to himself, on catching sight of Wasp, Spider, and Rat. Of their guilt he was certain, since they had a rope of bark for lowering the hives from the trees.

Hyena crept suddenly into the circle and faced the thieves in the flickering light



of the fire, in which his eyes shone green and red by turns.

"Who kindled this fire and what are you doing with that rope?" he demanded.

The guilty trio was too startled to reply, and with terror they heard, "You shall die."

Fear at last gave place to action, but almost too late. Yet there remained just time for Spider to roll himself in a leaf, for Wasp to take to the air, and for Rat to gasp "God save me" as he scurried into a hole at the root of a tree.

"And this is the reason," concluded the story teller, "why Spider, Wasp, and Rat hide themselves until this day so that Hyena cannot take revenge."



THE HONEY GATHERER AND LIZARD

IN MANY parts of Africa the natives make bee-hives of wood which are placed in the trees. Twice a year hunters let the hives down to the ground with a long rope. The honey and wax are then taken away.

A hunter who had collected a heavy load of wax was returning to his village when he heard the noise made by a large Monitor Lizard. This Lizard is so big that it seems like a young crocodile. Hunter was afraid so dropped his bundle of wax and climbed a tree.

When safe in the high branches he looked down and saw Lizard opening the bundle of wax.

"Leave that alone. It is mine," he cried.

"No, it cannot be yours, or you would not have left it so far behind you," replied the dishonest Lizard as he carried off the wax.

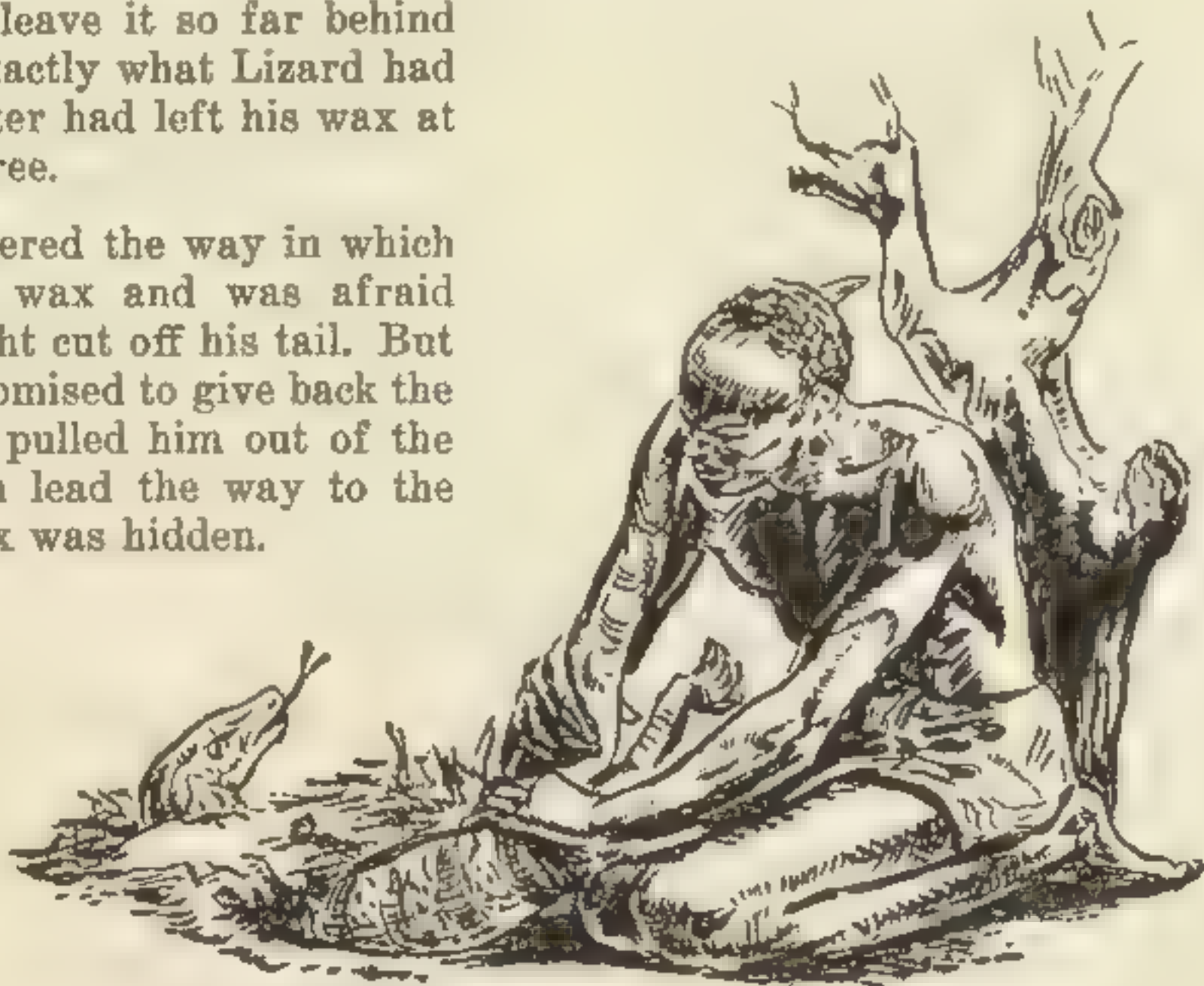
Some days later the hunter was passing through country where the grass was burning and all the animals were running from the flames. Lizard had found a hole into which his body would fit very well, but the hole was not long enough to allow him to draw in his tail. The hunter was quick to see a way of having his revenge for the stealing of the wax.

Seizing the tail, he shouted, "I have found a tail, it belongs to me."

"Oh, no," screamed Lizard. "That is my tail. Let go. Let go."

The cunning hunter replied, "If this is yours why do you leave it so far behind you?" This was exactly what Lizard had said when the Hunter had left his wax at the bottom of the tree.

Lizard remembered the way in which he had stolen the wax and was afraid that the hunter might cut off his tail. But Lizard cried and promised to give back the wax, so the hunter pulled him out of the hole and made him lead the way to the place where the wax was hidden.





HONEY GUIDE

IN SEVERAL parts of Africa there is a bird named Honey guide because he leads the way to places in hollow trees where Bees store their honey. People say that the Honey-guide is unfriendly to the Bees because at one time he wished to marry a bee. After all arrangements for the wedding were made, the Bees took away the bride so of course Honey-guide was

very lonely and disappointed. He therefore made up his mind to have revenge on Bees by eating their honey and showing their hiding places to men and animals.

One dear friend of Honey-guide was a bird named Redpoll who was delighted when his friend taught him how to find the honey.

"But," said Honey-guide, "you must not come alone and eat the honey."

Redpoll agreed that this would be a greedy thing to do, but soon forgetting his promise he came back to the stores of honey, quite alone, and finished them all.

Honey-guide was so angry with his greedy friend that he determined to have revenge by smearing the entrance to the honey-hole with a sticky substance called bird-lime. Having done this, he waited to see the result. After a few minutes Redpoll was seen trying to force his way into the hole where the honey was stored. He did not see the sticky lime so first a wing became fast, then a leg. At this Redpoll was very angry. He fluttered and fought to set himself free, but succeeded only in fastening the other wing and the other leg. He pecked fiercely with his beak, but that too became fast in the sticky lime.

When Honey-guide saw that Redpoll was a prisoner he gave him a sound beating for being a greedy and faithless friend.

"Now go," said Honey-guide, "and never again come with me when I lead the way to honey."

IV

SLOW AND SURE

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SLOW AND SURE

IN MOST Negro tribes boys have to go through a ceremony which is said to make them brave and useful men. At the age of about fourteen years a group of boys is taken into the forest for three months in charge of men who teach them the laws of the tribe.

When I entered a quiet part of the forest where several boys were hidden, I saw that all of them were making masks and clothing from bark and fiber. These articles were for use at a dance to be given at the end of the training.

No doubt the boys are glad to return to their own villages as men, since they have to suffer many hardships during training. In some camps parents may send a little food to their sons, but in other districts the boys have to catch or gather all their own food so that they will learn how to provide for themselves and their families. No fires are allowed, though the nights are cold in some parts of the tropics. Small acts of disobedience are severely punished by beating the culprits, and the boys have to remember at all times to be polite to the old men. A boy may not speak unless he is spoken to by one of the teachers. The only clothes allowed are skirts of grass which the boys make for themselves. I saw a few boys lying in cages made of boughs of trees. They had to live in these cages for two weeks.

The time passes slowly, for when hunting and other daily work is ended the evenings remain, and the boys may not play childish games. They have their drumming and dancing to learn, but there are times when the lads huddle together without any work to do. It is then that they compete in telling tales, but they have to whisper, since talking is forbidden in some of the camps. The tales of the tortoise are of the kind that boys like as they sit together, each telling a story in turn.



TORTOISE IS NOT
SO DULL AS
HE LOOKS

HARE prided himself that he was a clever fellow who could take advantage of any other animal. "I can fool them all," he boasted.

To prove this he sat by a water hole where chief Elephant had sent Lizard to find out who made the water muddy.

"Let us go to the fields and dig ground-nuts," suggested the Hare to the guardian of the pond.

"I do not know how to dig, and cannot hold the hoe," replied Lizard.

"There is no difficulty," Hare assured him, "for I will tie the hoe to your tail." So off they went to the field where Hare made fast the hoe to Lizard's tail and left him with the advice, "Keep striking the ground with your tail and you will dig up the nuts." Then Hare went to the pond, had a long drink, and made the water muddy.

"There has been a Lizard making the water muddy," complained Hare to Elephant.

"I can hardly believe that Lizard would do that," retorted Elephant.

"Then look for yourself," said Hare. "I caught him making the pool muddy so tied the hoe to his tail." In spite of his protests Lizard was dismissed with a warning not to show himself again, and Hare repeated the joke to all his friends.

In place of Lizard, Elephant appointed Antelope to guard the water hole, and once more Hare played the same trick.

"Perhaps I may trust Tortoise," reflected Elephant as he gave this strange animal the task of waiting by the pond to find who disturbed the mud.

In a short time Hare seated himself by Tortoise and made the suggestion that they should go digging. "I will tie the hoe to one of your short legs, then you will dig easily," offered Hare. "I am sure you would enjoy some ground-nuts."

Finally Tortoise was persuaded to go to the field, but on no account would he allow Hare to fasten the hoe to him. "I am able to dig with my feet," he explained.

In a short time the two had a pile of nuts, whereupon Hare suggested that they should walk about alone for a time. Off went Hare, but Tortoise crawled only a little way and watched. Soon Hare returned and began to load the nuts into his bag. He intended to make off with all the plunder.

Tortoise came from his hiding place, saying, "So that was your clever trick. I must watch you."

"I was only packing them up," Hare excused himself. "Shall we dig some sweet potatoes?" remarked Hare as another suggestion.

When there was a heap of fine potatoes, Hare said, "Sit there and I will go for a larger bag."

"What is his new trick?" asked Tortoise of himself. "I must keep a sharp lookout."

As Tortoise saw Hare inviting some men to see who had stolen the potatoes and was sitting on the heap, he crept into the bag which contained both nuts and potatoes.

Hare directed the men to the place where Tortoise was supposed to be resting, then seized his bag and ran as fast as he could. "They will find Tortoise and punish him," laughed Hare to himself as he raced along.

Meanwhile Tortoise was lying quietly in the bag eating the best of the potatoes and being carried along at a great rate, for Hare was a wonderful runner.

At last Hare stopped, put down the bag, and said, "I must rest and eat."

Hare put his paw in the bag and drew out a potato. "This is very small," remarked Hare disgustedly. "I thought there were some large potatoes in the bag," he declared, as once more his paw was dipped inside.

"Ha! Here is a large one," he shouted with satisfaction, laying hold of Tortoise.

For a moment Hare could scarcely believe his own eyes when Tortoise lay on the grass in front of him. "So I have carried you all these miles," screamed Hare, prancing with anger.

Tortoise made no reply, but drawing his head and feet within his hard shell he calmly went to sleep, leaving Hare to tire himself with jumping and threatening.

The patience of Hare was exhausted long before Tortoise had made up his mind to move.

"I must leave him," admitted Hare, as he set off in the direction of home. "He is a stupid fellow."

When the way was clear, Tortoise slowly poked out his head and feet, then crawled toward his home under the root of a tree.

HOW TORTOISE WON A PRIZE

LONG AGO when the world was young there stood a tree which grew until it stood above all other trees in the forests of West Africa. The trunk was thick and strong. The roots spread far under the ground while the great leafy branches shut off sunlight from all the trees around. The tree bore no fruits, and the wood was so hard that it could not be used as firewood.

A wealthy chief offered a prize to any animal who could pull down this great tree, and on the day appointed for the trial many animals gathered together. Most of the beasts thought that Elephant would win the prize easily because of his great strength and the use he could make of his powerful trunk. Certainly he tried very hard for a long time until quite tired, but he could do no more than make the tree sway from side to side.

Rhinoceros was the next to test his strength. He had no trunk but felt sure that the large horn at the end of his nose would uproot the tree. Bending low on his knees, he dug the horn under the roots, then tried to pry up the tree with all his might. After a time he gave up the struggle because the tree stood as firmly as ever. Moreover, one of the animals warned him that if the horn broke he would not be able to defend himself in the jungle.

Lion tried to scratch away earth from the roots, but broke his claws. The three strongest animals had tested their strength in vain, so they retired to the back of the crowd feeling rather ashamed and disappointed.

When Tortoise came forward to make an attempt there was a roar of laughter. He is not strong, and he did not look at all wise as he crawled along slowly wagging his head.

The chief told him that he might try, but said, "I do not think you will win the prize."

Now Tortoise was quite friendly with the White Ants who have strong jaws for cutting wood. These small blind ants, whose real name is Termites, work in tunnels which they build as they travel. There are so many enemies looking for them that they could not live long in the daylight.

The animals soon ceased laughing when they saw the long train of ants coming near the tree. Quickly the ants built their tunnels round the base of the tree, and working inside these they cut



at the strong wood of the trunk. After a few hours' work there were millions of ants inside the tree, all cutting and sawing at the inside wood. For several days and nights this went on until the tree began to bend and totter. Presently an evening breeze came to help the small workers, until at last the giant of the forest came crashing to the ground.

Tortoise was rewarded with the prize while the ants had the whole of the great tree as their home. All the other animals agreed that they would never again despise an animal because he seemed to be weaker than themselves.





THE HUNGRY HARE AND HIS FRIEND TORTOISE

A VERY hungry Hare suggested to his friend Tortoise that they should dig a burrow under the market place where food was sold. Hare did most of the digging because he is used to that kind of work, but Tortoise helped by shovelling away the soil and carrying it out of the tunnel.

Presently the two diggers could tell by the sounds of noise and laughter that they were under the market where people were buying and selling. Both Hare and Tortoise began to sing in shrill voices which were plainly heard by the people above. All the busy life of the market ceased as the strange song was heard from under the ground. The people looked at one another in fear, because such a thing had never been known. Who could these strange singers be, and what did they want? Suddenly fear came on all the people so that they hastily fled from the market, leaving all their food and valuables.

When all was quiet Tortoise and Hare came from under the ground into the market, where they saw no one but Lizard, who promised to help them. First of all Lizard began to steal some fish, then thinking that he would like a taste, he swallowed a portion so large that a bone stuck in his throat. He dipped his head in palm oil to try whether that would get rid of the painful bone. He succeeded only in making his head red with oil. People say that this is the reason why Lizards have red heads to this day. For a long time Lizard danced about on his hind legs shaking his head from side to side. Here is the reason why the Lizards, even today, go through these strange antics. At last he managed to get rid of the bone.

Meanwhile Tortoise and Hare had been collecting food which they carried to their homes. Day after day the trick was repeated. At last, the people, frightened by underground singing, fled from the market, but soon every one became suspicious that a trick was being played by dishonest people.

Someone had noticed that Hare and Tortoise were never to be seen on market day, so the two were taken to jail. On the day of the trial Tortoise hid several small birds under a pot near to the place where the trial was taking place. From time to time the birds made strange noises which so alarmed the judges that all ran away, leaving Tortoise and Hare to make their escape. The ungrateful Tortoise and Hare left behind the small birds who had helped them.

Next day when the people returned they found the little birds under the pot where Tortoise had placed them. The birds made a full confession and were forgiven for what they had done. As for Hare and Tortoise, they were punished for stealing food and also for deserting the birds who had helped them out of their trouble.

THE TORTOISE AND THE FOWL

"WHERE are you going?" asked Tortoise of Fowl who was hurrying into the bush.

"I am going to get ripe fruits to eat. Will you come with me?" replied the Fowl.

Tortoise thanked her and the two journeyed together until they arrived at the foot of a tree on which the most delicious fruits were growing. Several times they asked the tree to drop some fruit, but there was no reply.

"We shall have to help ourselves," declared the Tortoise.

The Fowl easily flew up into the branches while Tortoise remained below looking up at the fruit. After Fowl had shaken the branches a few ripe fruits fell on the hard back of Tortoise. They broke easily and Tortoise and Fowl agreed that the taste was very good.

"I would like some more of these," remarked Tortoise.

"Then climb and get them. I will remain below," answered Fowl.

Tortoise was a very long time climbing to the nearest branch, but at last he shook down some ripe fruits. Alas, one of the largest fruits fell on Fowl and killed her. Tortoise hurried down to his friend but could do nothing except carry the body home for burial. Suddenly Tortoise thought that he might like to eat the Fowl so he lit a fire and cooked the best parts, which were really very nice. Tortoise saved a leg bone from which he made a small flute.

One day as Tortoise was amusing himself by playing on the flute Hawk swooped down and said, "Give me the flute. I would like to play a tune."

"Oh, no!" replied Tortoise, "You might fly away with it."

"You may hold one of my feathers, then I cannot fly away," said Hawk.

"Very well," as he handed the flute and took hold of a feather of Hawk's wing. Hawk soared into the air, taking the flute and leaving only a feather with Tortoise.

Day after day Tortoise tried to think of a plan for recovering his flute from Hawk. One morning Tortoise noticed that Hawk had set off without the flute.

Evidently he had left it at home. Tortoise visited the nest of Hawk, where several fledglings were waiting for their parent to return.

"Your father has left his flute at home by mistake, and has asked me to get it for him," said Tortoise, who did not mind telling a falsehood in order to obtain his flute.

One of the young Hawks handed over the flute which Tortoise seized eagerly and carried home. That same evening Hawk visited Tortoise, hoping to play another trick to steal the flute once more. This time, however, Tortoise had the good sense not to allow the Hawk to touch the flute.



TORTOISE AND HARE IN LOVE WITH SQUIRREL



HARE and Tortoise, who were both in love with Squirrel, talked and quarreled for some time before they decided to ask her which she preferred as a husband.

Both arrived together at the foot of the tree where Squirrel had her home, and there they waited until she looked out of the hole and asked why they had come to visit her.

After listening to their story Squirrel said, "I will marry the one who is able to go without food and sleep for the longest time."

Both lovers agreed, so when night came on and Squirrel had gone to sleep comfortably in her nest they sat down at the foot of the tree, each determined to prove stronger than the other.

Hare was more cunning than Tortoise. He had guessed that there might be a time of waiting without food so had brought some in a bag. Tortoise was the first to cheat. He drew his head into his shell and was about to pretend that he was not really dozing. Hare allowed Tortoise to keep his head in his shell for a short time during which he had a nibble at the food from his bag.

When Hare had satisfied his appetite he said, "Push out your head, Tortoise, you must not draw your head in and go to sleep."

So Tortoise kept his head outside his shell and looked at Hare all the time.

Presently Hare began to feel sleepy and wished that Tortoise would draw in his head. Soon the sleepy Tortoise was obliged to pull in his head. Then Hare took a small grasshopper and tied it to the string of his own fiddle which he had brought with him. As the grasshopper jumped about it touched the strings of the fiddle and made music.

"Even if Tortoise pushes out his head, he will hear the fiddle and think that I am awake," said Hare as he lay down to sleep.

It is true that Tortoise wakened several times, but on hearing the fiddle he thought that Hare was awake so did his best to keep awake also. Hare got the better of Tortoise in all the cheating because he slept all night while Tortoise cheated only a little from time to time. Hare had had something to eat while Tortoise had taken no food at all. In the early morning Tortoise found some food and had a meal from which he left a small portion under a stone.

When Squirrel came down from the tree both Hare and Tortoise declared that they had had no food, neither had they slept a wink all night.

"I am not so sure," said Squirrel as she began searching round the foot of the tree. "What is this?" she said, lifting the stone under which Tortoise had left some food. There was no need to repeat the question because Tortoise looked so guilty. "And what is in your bag, Mr. Hare?" continued Squirrel, smiling pleasantly.

Hare hung his head, so Squirrel opened the bag and drew out some food. Hare had not a word to say for himself. Then Squirrel noticed the fiddle.

"Why did you bring a fiddle with you?" she asked sweetly.

"I brought it to play music to you," replied Hare, thinking that would please her.

But Squirrel was too quick for him. She asked at once, "Why is a grasshopper tied to the string?" "I know! I know!" cried Squirrel delightedly. "You cannot play so you deceived me by tying that poor creature to the fiddle," she continued, while releasing the grasshopper.

"I will have nothing to do with either of you. You are a pair of cheats," were Squirrel's last words as she ran up the tree and disappeared from view.



TORTOISE LOVED A GIRL

A YOUNG Negro girl, when feeling very sick, visited the hut of a doctor who said, "When you are ill eat some nuts from the oil palm tree." For a long time the girl waited by the side of a lonely forest path in order to speak to the animals as they returned from their evening meal.

First came Elephant. The girl's face brightened because she felt sure that Elephant could reach some nuts with his long trunk. But in reply to her polite question, "Will you please get some palm nuts for me?" the huge beast brushed by roughly, swinging his trunk from side to side and saying, "Get out of my way quickly or I shall tread on you."

Tears came into the girl's eyes, but she felt happier when Lion, king of beasts, came into view—surely he would help her. Very respectfully she said, making a curtsy, "Please, my lord Lion, could you shake down some palm nuts for me?" A low growl was the only answer as Lion went by swishing his tail angrily from side to side. "I'll make a meal of you," he said, "if you do not go away."

The poor girl was ill and tired, and all the animals had been so rude to her that she was almost afraid to ask Tortoise, who came crawling across the path, pausing now and then to move his head in search of worms. In a quiet voice the girl asked for a few palm nuts, and although Tortoise had only two for himself, he gave both to the girl, saying, "I hope you will be well again."

When the maiden was once more in good health she became the most beautiful girl of the country, and her father was worried from morning to night by



animals, who asked that she might keep house for them. Elephant who had been so unkind, also Lion who had been so angry, now wanted to have her. The poor little Tortoise who was also in love with her was quite surprised when the maiden said that she would prefer him to the others because he was kind, though rather ugly.

The girl's father said that he would set two tasks for the animals and the winner should have the girl to keep house for him. The first was the cutting down of a tree, and the second was the filling of a hole with tears. Both of these tasks Tortoise fulfilled before his rivals, Elephant and the Lion, because the girl brought some friends to help him.

Elephant was so angry that he wound his trunk around the girl and strode off with her into the forest. At first Tortoise was so upset that he did not know what to do, but soon he began to dig a deep pit across a path which he knew Elephant would use. Into this trap the great creature fell, for he did not see the hole which was cleverly covered with boughs of trees. Then Tortoise peeped over the edge of the pit. He said he would help Elephant to climb out if he would say where the girl was hidden. Away hurried Tortoise as fast as his short legs would carry him and found his lady safely hidden in the hollow trunk of a tree.



TORTOISE AND LEOPARD

TORTOISE and Leopard, who were great friends, had been living for so long on fruits and vegetables that they decided to go hunting together. Out they went into the great forest, where they built a hut and dug a deep trap. Not long had they to wait, for soon a little antelope fell into the trap. Day after day more food was added to the larder, until at last they said, "Let us carry the food home." Leopard whispered, "We will lay some leaves over the baskets so that no one will see what we are carrying."

When Leopard and Tortoise had finished packing, they were so tired that both lay down to sleep. Leopard snored very loudly. Tortoise was glad that his friend made such a noise because a wicked plan had entered his brain. "I will take the meat from Leopard's basket and place it in my own," he said.

So Tortoise crawled quietly over the floor of the hut and gave Leopard some stones to carry instead of the meat. Of course cunning Tortoise covered the Leopard's basket with leaves which quite hid the stones. Next morning, Leopard growled when he lifted the great weight. "My basket seems to have become heavier during the night," he complained angrily. But fortunately for Tortoise he did not think of opening the basket.

The two animals set off together through the forest, Leopard complaining of his heavy load, and Tortoise laughing to himself because of the trick he had played on his friend. At last the animals arrived at a point where they had to part, so saying "goodbye," each travelled along a path to his own home. As Leopard drew near to the cave where he lived, he saw his wife cooking vegetables. Very loudly he shouted, "Throw away that food, I have brought home some meat." The wife did as she was told, then lifted the lid of the basket. Nearby sat Leopard sniffing eagerly as he swished his tail from side to side and thought how glad his wife would be to have the meat.

Carefully Mrs. Leopard took away the leaves from the top of the basket, and Oh dear!—only a pile of stones. The angry wife threw these at her husband, who



was too surprised to speak. Followed by stones and loud threats he ran away with his tail between his legs. "Why did you make me throw away our dinner?" called the angry wife.

Presently Leopard summoned courage to return home to tell his wife of the wicked trick Tortoise had played on him. Then Mrs. Leopard was sorry she had thrown stones at her husband, and the two went out side by side to find their enemy. Tortoise was so afraid that he drew his head and legs into his hard shell. This, however, could not save him, for the angry Leopards dug him out with their claws and ate him. Leopard is now very careful to choose good friends.



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BOYS AND BIRDS

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BOYS AND BIRDS

WHEN living in Portuguese West Africa I found that young boys were interested in bird life. Even the older people imagined that the birds talked to each other. Their piping and whistling began at sunrise.

I am afraid that boys often rob the nests of birds, but we must remember that Negro boys have some excuse for this since they have to use every kind of food available, and the eggs are appetizing. Some boys make a sticky gum. They place this on twigs to snare small birds which are kept in cages as pets. A little bright yellow bird is a great favorite.

Often I have seen boys making arrows with blunt wooden tips and these they shoot with great skill. But some birds they will not harm in any way for these are greatly feared. Onduva is a bird whose feathers are used to decorate kings and medicine-men. The latter are magicians who are believed to have power to bring rain and to heal the sick. Esuvi is a bird which is greatly feared because it can catch spirits of the dead. The cry of the bird Onjimbi makes people unhappy because the noise is a warning of death, and they wonder who will die.

Every child knows the way in which the male and female birds call to each other. The boys told me that one bird said to his mate "Do you eat rats?" and the female replied "No, I don't like their tails."

Pigeons keep saying "We believe in stealing," and their conduct proves the truth of this, for they rob the corn fields. Each morning young boys leave home at dawn, taking a few hot sticks from the fire to keep them warm in the fields until the sun is high. There the boys remain to scare birds from the crops. In some fields high platforms are built so that the boy can see a long distance. All day long he can hear the birds and study their habits.

In every village a guest house is built for visitors, because Negroes are kind people who think it right to give a traveler food and shelter. One bird is said to call "Where will the guest stay, where! where! where!" and on hearing this someone sweeps out the guest house and makes ready for a visitor.



THE BIRDS AND THEIR KING

WHEN all the birds assembled to elect their king many different names were mentioned until at last a pretty young bird with red and yellow feathers was chosen. Before this great honor was given to him the bird had been popular, but now his conduct changed. He strutted about, boasting of the things he intended to do when he became ruler over all the birds. The birds who had chosen him became so tired of his boasting that they called him to a meeting where he was told that his bad con-

duct had caused the birds to change their plans. They no longer wanted him as king.

The second choice fell on a beautiful white bird who, like the first one chosen, was quite young.

Many birds said, "That pretty white bird is far too young."

But others replied, "He is clever and beautiful. We have seen his courage, and want him as king."

The mother of this bird explained that she had a magic bath in which he could wash on the day he became king.

"But on no account must you take a bath in this magic water until the day has arrived. A king must learn to be obedient before he is able to rule others," said the mother bird.

For a long time the white bird was able to keep his promise, but at last his curiosity was too strong.

"I will find out what this magic bath is made of," he said as he stood ready to take a plunge.

He had been told that the bath would give him long life and good health on the day he became king.

"But," warned the mother, "the bath may do you much harm if you disobey me!"

All the warnings were forgotten as the foolish bird made a plunge into the bath. He cried with shame and anger as he saw his beautiful white feathers turn a dull brown color; all his beauty was gone.

Presently the mother, who had missed her son, heard a most sorrowful song coming from the woods. As she approached the sound she heard the words "I

cannot get it off, I cannot get it off," repeated time after time in mournful chirruping.

The sound told the mother only too plainly what had happened, but she hastened to the spot and tried to comfort her boy.

"We cannot get off the black," said the mother sadly,"

"And I shall never be king," piped the penitent young bird.

"I will see whether I can persuade the birds to have you," replied the fond mother.

The birds listened to the mother's pleading as she told them that this was the first time that her son had been disobedient.

"Then we will all forgive him," replied the oldest bird of the council and right away they made him king.



DOVE, HERON, AND JACKAL



JACKAL has a bad character, for he is cunning and clever and not brave. The animals know that he is cruel to small creatures who are weaker than himself.

Dove kept her brood of little ones in their nest in a high tree where she felt that they would be quite safe.

Jackal stood at the foot of the tree his yellow eyes glowing in the evening twilight. Looking up with an evil grin, he said, "Mother Dove, if you will give me one of your little ones, I will spare you and the rest of the brood."

The poor gentle mother was so afraid that she lost all sense. She even forgot that a Jackal cannot climb a tree. For a long time she hesitated, then when Jackal cried, "I am coming up the tree," she gave him a young dove who had been sick and likely to die. Jackal went away well pleased with his supper, but next night hunger drove him to the tree once more. Again Jackal made his demand, and once more he was satisfied because a young dove, frightened by the sight of the Jackal's fierce eyes, fluttered over the edge of the nest.

Next day Dove visited Heron and told the sad story of her young ones.

Heron said, "Are you so foolish as to listen to the Jackal? I thought everyone knew that he could not climb a tree."

Dove thanked Heron for the advice, then went back to her nest in the high tree. As usual Jackal arrived at the base of the tree about sunset to make his demand for supper.

He was quite surprised when the timid Dove spoke boldly, "You cannot climb a tree," she said. "Go away and hunt for your supper."

"I know who has taught you. I saw you talking to Heron today," replied Jackal. "I will teach Heron to mind her own business."

With these words Jackal slunk away to the edge of the pond where Heron was fishing. Heron was standing on one of her long legs with the other leg tucked up.

Presently Heron stood on both legs and stretched out her long neck to get ready for some fishing and searching in the mud at the bottom of the pond. Jackal watched with a cruel smile as Heron dipped her head below water.

Then he struck savagely at her thin long neck, saying "This will put a twist in your neck to teach you to mind your own affairs."

Heron was stronger than he thought. It is true that the blow was painful, and to this day her neck can never be straightened out, but quickly recovering from the blow, she spread her wings and gave the Jackal a sound beating. The Jackal was no fighter. He had hoped to kill the Heron with one blow, but now he fled for his life followed by those beating wings and the long cruel beak. He just managed to reach his home under the roots of a tree, and there lay more dead than alive. He never again interfered with Dove or Heron.





THE CHILDREN OF RINGDOVE AND HORNBILL

ONE morning when all the birds were together one of them asked, "Who is the most beautiful bird?" And all answered "Blackbird." He certainly looked very handsome as his black feathers shone in the sun. Ringdove was a gentle friendly bird without beautiful feathers. She therefore asked that Blackbird would make her beautiful like himself. This he promised to do the very next day when all the birds met at the pool to drink and have a bath.

Soon after sunrise next morning, when all the birds were hopping near the edge of the pond, Blackbird said to Ringdove, "Come here and I will make you beautiful like myself.

Blackbird then placed his foot on the neck of Ringdove, and when he took it away there was a ring of dark feathers which can be seen on the necks of Ringdoves to this day. Blackbird made Ringdove pretty because she was gentle and kind. The only harm that Ringdove did was to eat some corn from the people's fields.

Ringdove had a friend whose name was Hornbill, a rather large bird with a big beak, but in spite of the size of Hornbill and the gentleness of Ringdove the two lived happily together and each had a baby bird. Hornbill was jealous of the pretty child of Ringdove so planned to steal her.

"Come with me to the forest," said Hornbill to Ringdove. "The children will be quite safe while we are away."

Ringdove did not suspect a trick as the two

flew off together. After they had flown a few miles, Hornbill remarked, "I am sorry to leave you, but I must go to see some friends."

No sooner was Ringdove out of sight than Hornbill hurried back to their home and flew off with the child of Ringdove.

Presently Ringdove, who had suspected no harm, returned to find that her little one was missing. Weeping and in great distress, Ringdove went to Fisheagle who was said to be wiser than all other birds. He at once told Ringdove that Hornbill had taken her child to a far country. Ringdove was afraid she could not fly so far, but this did not matter. Fisheagle mounted Ringdove on his back, stretched his great wings, and in a few minutes both were soaring over mountains and valleys to the far off country.

When Ringdove arrived she found that Fisheagle had told the truth, for there was the little Ringdove married to Flamingo, the most beautiful prince of birds. Mother Ringdove felt very proud of her child and the beautiful prince of birds who had married her. Ringdove, her child, and Flamingo lived very happily together. All the birds said that Ringdove was happy because she had a kind nature.

At times Hornbill came hopping around in his clumsy way, no doubt thinking that he might steal the young Ringdove once more, but Fisheagle always kept a sharp lookout and drove away Hornbill whenever he came too near.



THE BIRDS AND THE WIND

THE roaring Wind was in a boastful mood when he cried, "What a great hero I am! There is no man or bird, big or little, who can move so fast as I do."

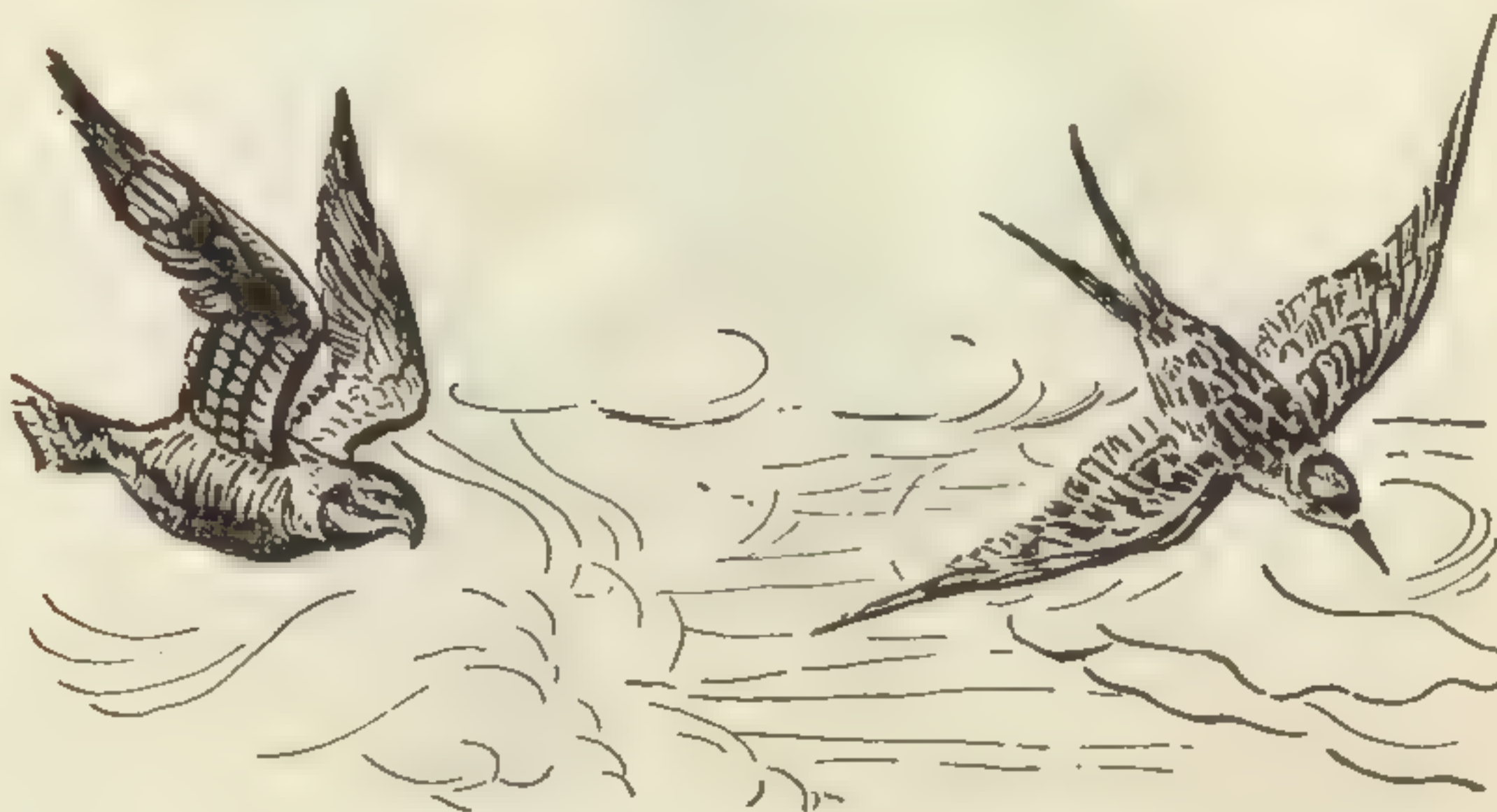
Swallow, who was flying swiftly by, holding her mouth open to catch insects, said, "Why do you boast so much?"

Wind lulled for a minute to hear what this bold little bird had to say.

"Although you are swifter than many birds you are not swifter and stronger than every bird."

Still Wind continued to boast of his great speed, saying, "Call together all the birds and let us have a race."

Of all the land birds Eagle, Hawk, and the Heron are the swiftest. Of all the seabirds, Frigate Bird and Albatross are swiftest on the wing. To all these the Swallow told the story of the boasting Wind. Then all the birds were very angry and their shrill screams of temper could be heard for miles around. Wind shrieked in reply as Hawk was the first to try his skill. Four times he attempted to fly against the wind, but was driven back each time until tired out. Then Eagle, and in turn the great seabirds spread their strong wings which had carried them over so many miles of land and sea, but all in vain. Wind beat them back and whirled them round so that several of them were almost dashed to death against



the rocks and trees. Eagle made no less than six attempts to fly over the top of a high mountain. At last, tired and angry, he was obliged to own himself defeated.

Swallow, who had been watching all the large birds, now made up her mind to try. Just as she started, Wind in evil mood came right behind so that he might blow the little bird against some high trees. But Swallow increased her speed and darted ahead of the Wind until she was flying in air which was quite calm. Wind, now aroused to fury, increased his pace so that he roared and bellowed behind the small bird, threatening every moment to overtake her.

At last even the giant Wind became tired out in his efforts to kill the Swallow, who had taught him not to be boastful, proud, and cruel. All the birds flocked round to thank Swallow for giving Wind a lesson in good behavior.



ANT AND DOVE HELP AN ORPHAN BOY

WHEN the parents of Hosi died, the chief of the African village did not know who would look after the child. Nobody wished to keep and feed him. All day the chief considered the matter and at last came to the conclusion that Hosi must be killed while hunting. "We will ask him to go to the hunt, then we must pretend that his death was an accident," explained the chief to his men. "There will be no need to feed him, and nobody will suspect us," concluded the wicked chief.

Hosi was a bright boy who heard something of their plans, so escaped from the hunting party as soon as possible and sat down on a stone in the forest. As he watched the ants working at their tunnel beneath the stone, Hosi felt sad because he had no company, while the ants had enough and to spare.

After a time one of the ants addressed the boy, saying, "Why are you so gloomy?"

"I have no friends, and the hunters want to take my life," replied Hosi.

"Let me help you," suggested Ant kindly.

"It is very good of you," responded the boy, "but are you not too small to aid me?"

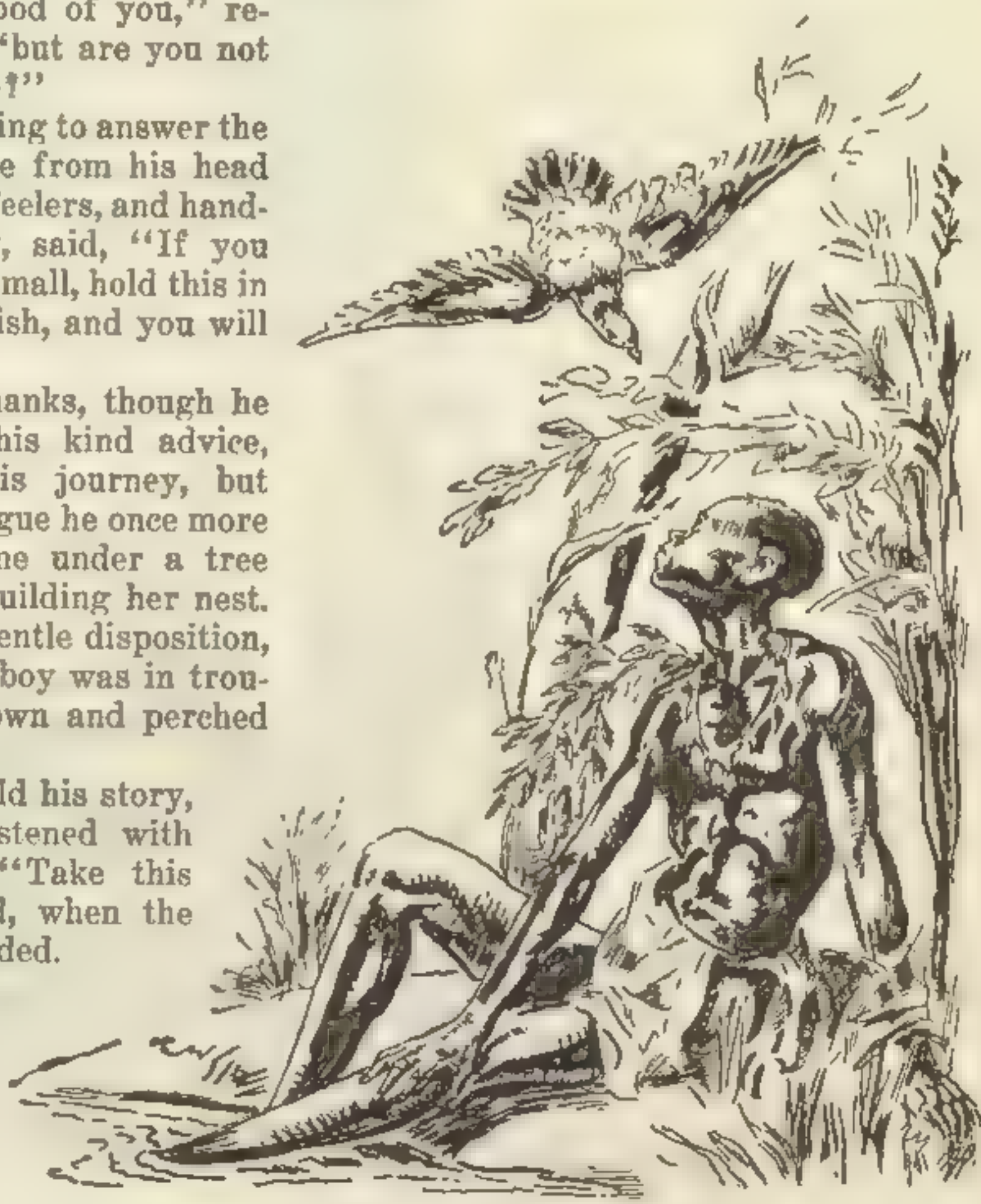
Without troubling to answer the question Ant broke from his head one of the slender feelers, and handing it to the boy, said, "If you should want to be small, hold this in your hand, then wish, and you will turn into an ant."

With many thanks, though he did not believe this kind advice, Hosi continued his journey, but overcome with fatigue he once more sat down, this time under a tree where Dove was building her nest. Dove, who had a gentle disposition, soon saw that the boy was in trouble, so she flew down and perched by his side.

Again Hosi told his story, to which Dove listened with great sympathy. "Take this feather," she said, when the tale of woe was ended.

"But what can I do with it?" Asked Hosi, quite puzzled.

"When your enemies are gain-



ing on you, take the feather in your hand, then wish that you had wings," advised Dove, as she flew back into the tree.

Suddenly there came the voices of angry men. "There he is," they cried. "Now we will finish him."

Fast as he ran, Hosi felt that the pursuers were gaining on him, but in spite of his fear he thought of the advice of Dove. Holding up the feather he exclaimed, "I wish I had wings and could fly away from these men." Immediately the change was made and Hosi became a dove which soon outdistanced the pursuers. Then, when quite safe, he wished himself as a boy, and the change having been made, he continued his travel.

Now a storm gathered. Great black clouds were cut by streaks of jagged lightning and soon the rain would fall in torrents. Just at this moment Hosi came into a clearing where stood a small hut without door or windows. "If only I could get inside and shelter," he said to himself.

For a moment he had forgotten the gift of Ant and the advice which was proffered, but on recollecting what Ant had said he held up the feeler and exclaimed, "I wish I were as small as an Ant." The change was sudden, and in a moment Hosi became an ant which ran quickly through a crack in the wall and into the shelter of the hut.

Once inside he changed himself into a boy by wishing again, but alas, there was no good news from the woman who lived in the hut. "I am the servant of a terrible master," she declared. "Hide yourself before he returns."

Hardly had Hosi tucked himself away in a dark corner when a man of fierce aspect made a hole in the roof and entered, scenting the boy at once and demanding his life.

"There is no boy here," the woman repeated again and again, until at last the man was satisfied and went to sleep.

The woman and the boy then made their escape to a far away village where, after many years, the lad who had been hunted ruled as a great chief.

He made a law that his people must on no account kill an ant or a dove, because he never forgot that he owed his life to the creatures who had defended him.



THE FOWLS AND THE CATS

THE Fowls had bright red combs on their heads and of these they were very proud. The Cats had to work for the Fowls because the latter said that their combs were red-hot, so they could be used to burn anyone who was disobedient. Every day the Fowls sent the Cats to the forest to collect honey, fruits, and firewood. The Cats worked hard for the Fowls, but never received anything in return.

One day, when the Cat's fire had gone out, a mother sent her Kitten to the Fowls to ask for fire. On arriving at the place where the Fowls lived, Kitten saw a Fowl asleep on the ground, and not wishing to disturb the sleeper he placed a stick near the comb, hoping to obtain a light. Kitten thought that the bright red comb would set fire to his stick. Such was the story his mother had told him.

After trying for a long time Kitten ran home and told all the Cats that he had not been able to get fire from Fowl's comb. The Cats refused to believe him.

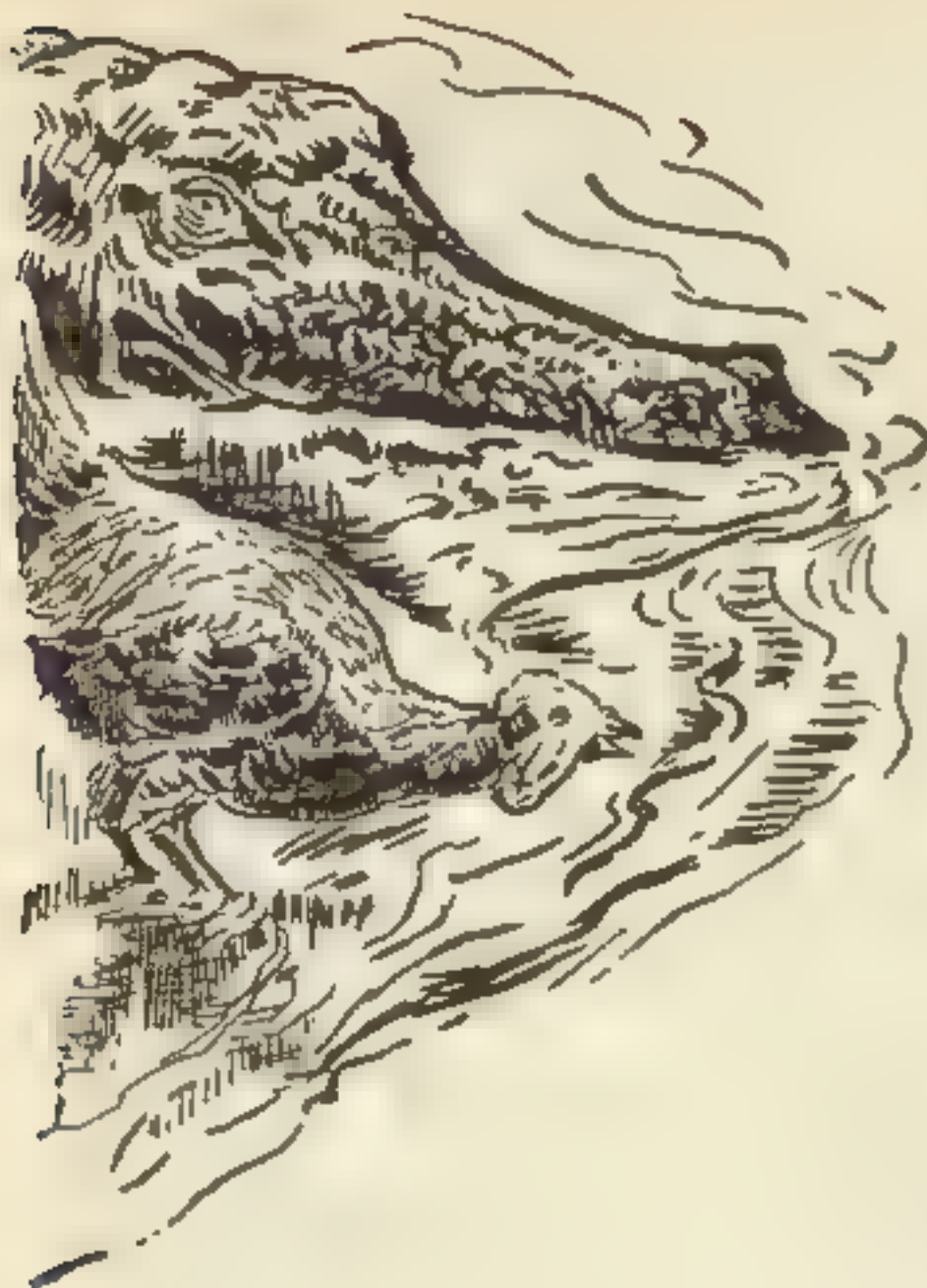
"Go and try again," they ordered.

Kitten once more came near to the sleeping Fowl and touched the red comb with his stick. Again nothing happened. The stick remained cold. Getting bolder, Kitten stretched out his paw and touched the comb very gently, greatly afraid of being burnt, but the comb was not even warm.

Much excited by this discovery, Kitten ran off to tell all the Cats of his ad-

venture. Immediately the Cats set off to find out the truth for themselves. One by one they touched the red comb of the sleeper until at last they were satisfied that the Fowls had been deceiving them. The sleeping Fowl awakened, called other Fowls, and all began a noisy clucking. They ordered the Cats to work, but in vain. The Cats were no longer afraid of them. The Fowls had been able to cheat for a little time, but their falsehoods were found out and punished.





CROCODILE AND HEN

DAY after day Crocodile lay lazily in the mud of the river's bank with only his snout showing above the surface. He was waiting patiently for some foolish person to come down to the water to bathe or fill a water pot, then he would have been no longer dead, and with one quick swirl he would drag the bather into the depths of the river.

In spite of his long wait nobody happened to come that way, but at last a fat Hen came to the edge of the water to drink. For some time he watched her taking a little water in her beak, then throwing back her head and moving the parts of her beak as hens like to do. At last Hen

noticed that there was a Crocodile but did not seem at all afraid.

"Good day brother Crocodile," she said.

On hearing this civil greeting Crocodile did not like to make the attack which he had been thinking about; and before he had made up his mind Hen has disappeared.

A little while later Crocodile was wandering on the bank of the river when he met Lizard, who looks like a small relative of Crocodile though he is not at all dangerous. The two had scarcely stopped to speak when Crocodile said, "I can understand why you call me brother. We are something like one another, but why does Hen call me brother?"

"Now try to think," said Lizard.

For a time Crocodile was silent, but his brain is so small that he was not able to think for more than a few seconds, then he nearly fell asleep.

Lizard woke him saying, "When your wife scratches a hole in the sand what does she place there?"

Even Crocodile could answer this question.

"Eggs," he returned promptly.

"And what does my wife lay in the sand?" demanded Lizard.

"Eggs," replied Crocodile once more.

Then Lizard led the way to a place where Hen was sitting on some of her eggs, and in another place there were some chickens actually breaking out of their shells. Slowly the truth dawned on Crocodile.

"Why, Hen lays eggs just as we do," he said after a long pause.

"Yes, and that is the reason why Hen called you brother," added Lizard.

THE HUNTER AND THE BIRD

A HUNTER who had set some snares for small birds was surprised to find that he had caught a handsome Secretary Bird. This is a creature which kills and eats snakes. The Secretary Bird is something like a stork because of its long legs and large sharp bill.

The Secretary Bird cried, "Let me go and some day I will help you."

Some weeks later Hunter along with his wife and child made preparation for a long journey on which they were obliged to carry their own food.

When a few days' march from home they had the misfortune to meet a large python. The python is not a poisonous snake but it is of great size, and its coils when thrown round a victim quickly crush the animal to death.

At first Python appeared satisfied with the food carried by the family, but after this was consumed he threatened the lives of the woman and her child. In this terrible moment Hunter remembered the name Cinjila which Secretary Bird had told him to use if in trouble.

Loudly Hunter called "Cinjila! Cinjila! I saved you, please save me."

There came a rustling in the trees, the bush parted and out walked the Secretary Bird, stalking slowly along looking as if he were on stilts, so long are his legs. He held back his head as if ready to strike, whereupon Python quickly glided into the undergrowth, leaving Hunter and his family unharmed.



VI

ADVENTURES OF HARE



VI

ADVENTURES OF HARE

HARE HAS SOME WILD ADVENTURES

AMONG Negro tribes no man knows the habits of animals so well as the hunter, since his whole life is given to the chase. When a boy he has to enter the service of a trained hunter who takes him on all the expeditions.

Among the Ovimbundu tribe of Angola, West Africa, a hunter has not only to understand the making of traps, the ways of game, and the use of such weapons as bows, spears, and guns, he must also observe some magical rites.

The cooking pots the hunter uses must never be used by other people. He is the only person who may enter a small hut in which are kept the bows and arrows of dead hunters who were famous for their skill. The night before the chase the hunter visits the hut and pours over the weapons an offering of beer and palm-oil as a gift to the spirits of the dead. Sometimes the medicine-man kills a chicken whose blood is used for sprinkling the weapons.

The day after these magical rites have been performed the hunter sets out after first washing his eyes with herbs to give him keen vision. He is accompanied by one or more dogs whose ears have been cut at the tips, "to make them hear when called" as the hunters say. Toward evening the hunter returns, or he may be absent for several days.

It is a joyful sight to see the hunting party with an antelope slung on a pole. The hunters are shouting and singing as they think of a meal of meat instead of only corn and vegetables. A successful hunter places skulls of animals on poles near his hut, and at his death he is buried under a cairn of stones to which his trophies are added as ornaments.

Hunters like to tell stories of the hare which is one of the most cunning of animals, and we may be sure that children are glad to listen to such fables as those which follow.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF HARE AND COW

AT ONE time Lioness and Cow lived together in a friendly way. They were on such good terms that the Lion Cub and Calf played together and all used the same well of clear water.

Cow said, "If your Lion Cub fouls the water, I will kill him with my long horns."

To this unfriendly speech Lion replied, "And if your Calf makes the water muddy, I will tear him with my sharp claws." Lion stretched out her nails as she said this, and Cow noticed that they were very sharp.

The next day Calf and Lion Cub were playing by the pool when Calf accidentally knocked some mud into the well and made the water dirty.

Cow was alarmed as she asked, "Who did this?"

The frightened Calf replied, "I made the water muddy, Mother."

Cow explained to Calf that they must both run away at once before mother Lion returned.

Off they went, running as quickly as they could, but that was not very fast because Calf's legs were too weak to keep up with the mother. When Cow and Calf met a herd of elephants they were asked, "Where are you going in such a hurry?" Cow told the whole of the story and explained that they were running to save their lives from Lion.

Elephant kindly said, "Stay with us and we will protect you with our great tusks."

After all had settled for the night Lion came near, gave her terrible roar, then spent the whole night in prowling round the herd of elephants.



When morning dawned, Cow heard the sad words, "You and your Calf can not stay with us a second night. Lion spoiled our sleep. You must go."

So Cow and her Calf were soon without protection. There was nothing to do but hurry along as quickly as possible, occasionally stopping to eat for a few minutes, or to drink at a pool. Cow was pleased to meet some Buffaloes, and although Buffalo is one of the fiercest animals in Africa, Cow felt sure that he would not hurt her and the Calf because Buffaloes and Cows are like one another in appearance; they are relatives. That night Cow and Calf felt secure among the herd of buffaloes, but once more Lion came growling round the herd.

Next morning Chief Buffalo said, "I am sorry, but you and your Calf will have to leave us. We have not had any sleep, and Lion will follow as long as you are with us."

Cow and Calf had been traveling for two days. During the past two nights they had been kept awake by Lion, so both were very tired as they tried to hurry along. When Hare stopped to ask why they were running, Cow thought it a waste of time to answer the question. Hare seemed far too small and weak to protect them from Lion. But Cow was civil enough to answer the question, with the result that she and her Calf were soon led to a shelter in a rock.

Hare shut the door, then said, "Give me some milk."

Cow was pleased to give a small pail of milk to Hare, thinking that he wanted a drink, but Hare just placed the pail on the floor, saying, "Now give me a little of your blood."

This request thoroughly alarmed Cow. Why did the Hare want some blood? was he about to kill her? Hare drew a little blood in a wooden cup which he set on the floor by the pail of milk, then all fell asleep.

In the night there was a loud roaring and scratching at the door.

"Who is there?" asked Hare timidly.

"Lion has come for Cow and her Calf," was the growling answer. "Open the door at once," she continued.

Without waiting for Hare to obey, Lion crashed through the door and stood in the middle of the room lashing her tail and growling fiercely. Cow and Calf moaned piteously, but Hare kept his courage.

Quick as a flash Hare dashed the cup of blood against Lion's side, shouting, "Look at the blood pouring out of your side!"

Then seizing the pail of milk, Hare dashed it at Lion's head.

"Look at your white brains coming out of your head," shouted Hare.

Lion did look. She was horrified to see the blood on her side and the white milk on her head. With one frightened growl she turned and fled through the hole she had made in the door. Hare laughed loudly as Cow and Calf thanked him for his bravery and cunning.

"I never thought that one so small could be so kind and brave," said Cow. The three lived happily together and Hare always had milk when he wanted it.



HARE AND THE LION'S CAVE

HARE and Hyena were very good friends. They used to go for walks together, and each promised to tell the other about any food that he found. One day when Hare was walking out alone he found the den of Lion in front of which was a large round stone. Hare did not know how to move the heavy stone so waited in hiding until Lion returned. To Hare's great surprise Lion did not push the stone, he just said "stone, open," and the stone rolled to one side. When Lion was inside he called out "stone, close," and the stone rolled in front of the entrance.

"That is very easy," thought Hare, so next day he visited the cave when Lion was absent. On giving the order "stone, open," Hare found that the stone rolled away just as it had moved aside for Lion. The inside of the cave appeared at first to be rather dark, but soon Hare could see that there were three rooms, one for the meat, one for the fat, and another for the bones. Hare made a good meal of meat and fat then decided to go away before Lion returned. On entering the cave Hare had commanded the stone to close, so now he gave the order "stone, open," and in an instant he was through the opening and out of doors. Hare was too cunning to leave the door open, as that would have told Lion that a visitor had been to the cave. Hare therefore closed the entrance by calling out the words "stone, close."

A little way from the cave Hare met his friend, Hyena, who said, "You have been eating something good, there is some meat on your nose and whiskers." At first Hare was inclined to tell a lie as he wished to keep the store of food for himself, but he remembered the agreement he had made with Hyena; each had promised to share his finds with the other.

Hare tried to get out of the difficulty by saying, "Hyena, you know how very stupid you are. Men catch you in their traps so easily that I am afraid you could not learn the way to get this food."

Hyena was annoyed to think that Hare thought him to be so stupid so demanded again that he should be told how to get the food. Hare at last gave way and set out along the road to the cave.

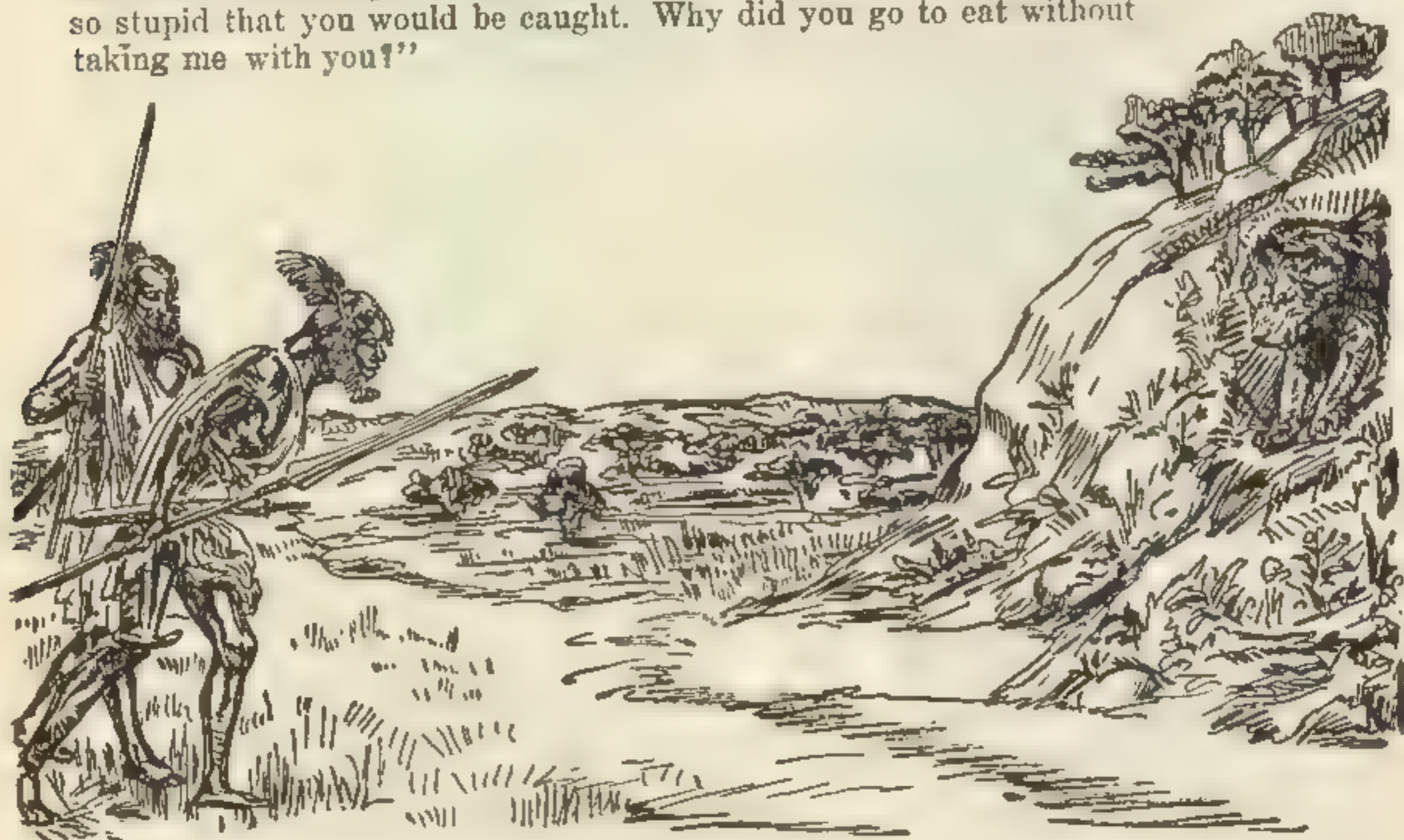
On arriving at the entrance Hare taught Hyena how to command the stone to roll away, then when they were inside, Hare reminded Hyena that he must close the door. Hyena has very strong jaws so Hare decided to show him only the bones, feeling sure that Hyena could break these with his powerful teeth. While Hyena was busy cracking bones Hare had a good feed from the meat and fat, but Hyena did not suspect this until they were outside the cave and on their way home.

A few days later Hyena was out alone. He thought he would pay a visit to the cave to find out what Hare had been having while he was gnawing the bones. Hyena had no difficulty in entering the cave because he remembered the words "open, stone," and when inside, he did not forget to command the stone to close. Then followed a feast of all the good things Lion had stored in the cave.

When he could eat no more Hyena thought he ought to get away as quickly as possible before Lion returned. So he shouted "stone, close," but nothing happened. The stone was already closed and could not obey him. Hyena shouted again and again, growing more angry and shouting louder as the precious moments slipped away.

Hyena thought of the warning Hare had given him, "You are so stupid that you are sure to be caught." The recollection of this made Hyena more angry still as he tugged at the stone and shouted "stone, close." Through a little hole at the side of the door Hyena could see that daylight was breaking and night was passing. With the break of day Lion would appear. Then at last Hyena heard soft padding footsteps and a low growl. Lion had arrived. Too late to be of any use Hyena heard the command "stone, open," and as the great boulder rolled away Hyena saw Lion in the dim morning light. Worse than all, Lion had been out all night without catching any prey, so his temper was very bad.

After a terrible moment Lion grabbed Hyena by the back of the neck and almost shook the life out of him. It was bad enough to have a thrashing from Lion, but this was not so painful as hearing his friend Hare say, "I told you you were so stupid that you would be caught. Why did you go to eat without taking me with you?"





THE LITTLE HARE AND HYENA

A YOUNG Hare set to work to build a house for himself. All day long he toiled collecting wood to build the sides of the home, but toward evening he went away to the woods to sleep.

As darkness came along, Hyena, who always prowls at night, came sniffing around.

"Somebody is building a house in the daytime," he said to himself. "If I go on with the work at night, the house will belong to me."

Hyena worked hard all night in collecting more wood for the building, and at the first sign of daybreak he retired to his den in the hills.

This was near the very time that Hare was waking from a sound sleep and making a resolve to work all day at his house. Before the sun was high in the sky Hare had made the sides of the house, but he had to dig deep ditches in which to fix up the poles. Darkness came on as he was so employed and he had to retire for the night.

Presently Hyena visited the site to see how the work was progressing.

"Somebody has dug the foundations," Hyena said. Then he worked very hard in fixing the poles upright, and before daybreak the building began to look like a real house. Hyena was sorry that he could not go on working through the day, but this would have been quite contrary to his habits so he retired to rest.

Hare was astonished at the progress, and while he worked he muttered to himself, "Some kind fairy is helping me in the night. Who is this fairy who collected more wood and fixed some of the poles?"

By the end of the day Hare had collected several bundles of grass for making a thatched roof.

Hyena was so surprised at the progress that he had to sit down and think for a time, wondering who his strange helper might be.

"Never mind, the house will belong to me. I have done most of the work," he said.



Hyena worked all night. He finished the door and made a little fireplace. Then he retired to his cave at daybreak, saying, "Tomorrow night I will sleep in my new home."

Hare danced with joy when he arrived in the morning.

"There is a door and a fireplace, everything is ready. The kind fairy has been working all night," he exclaimed joyfully. He went indoors and made himself quite comfortable.

Soon after sunset he heard the strange laugh of the Hyena and trembled with fear. Summoning his courage he peeped out and saw Hyena coming near, bringing with him an animal he had killed. This so terrified Hare that he first thought of running away and leaving the house to Hyena. This made him feel sad because he had worked so hard. He had had no idea that the good fairy who worked at night was Hyena. Suddenly Hare had a bright idea. He made all kinds of terrible noises which so startled Hyena that he ran away and left the little Hare to enjoy his new home.



THE FRIENDSHIP OF HARE AND ELEPHANT

ELEPHANT had a large garden in which a fine crop of sugar cane grew. He was not a greedy animal so invited a large number of animals, large and small, to attend a feast at which sugar cane was to be chewed. Soon after receiving the invitation the guests began to arrive. Lion, Zebra, Antelope, and many others seated themselves in a long line waiting for the sugar cane to be served to them. Sugar cane grows in long tough stalks which have a hard outside skin, so Elephant, who liked good manners, said that he would throw out of the party any animal who made a noise (squelch) when eating. Not one of the animals had the good sense to peel off the hard outside skin, so before long there came a loud noise (squelch) from Buffalo who was greedily munching his stick of sugar cane.

Elephant, who had been listening attentively, turned on him at once and placing his long trunk round Buffalo threw him out of the line of guests. A few minutes later Zebra made a squeching noise which caused all the other animals to turn their heads to look at the offender. Without hearing the excuses of Zebra, Elephant threw him from the party, after a short struggle. This made the other animals eat more carefully, but in spite of their care they were turned out one by one for making rude noises while eating.

A few days later Elephant invited them again, and on this occasion Hare was included in the party. Hare, though small, was clever.

He said at once to Elephant, "Please peel off the outside skin for me."

This Elephant did without knowing why Hare had asked this favor. The other animals went on munching steadily, while now and then one of them was turned from the party for making a squeching noise. Each animal looked at Hare, fully expecting that he would soon be turned away for bad manners. But Hare smiled to himself because he knew that he was not likely to make a noise. He made a hearty meal and soon discovered that he was the only remaining guest at the party. Elephant had been watching and listening carefully without hearing the faintest noise of eating. This pleased him so much that he became a great friend of the little well-mannered Hare.





HARE DECEIVES BABOON

HARE and Baboon who were great friends had the misfortune to be caught in a fire caused by the sun's heat. The grass became brown and dry as the heat continued, until at last the whole countryside was ablaze. Baboon who was near the edge of the fire escaped easily but he thought Hare had been burned to death, for Hare was somewhere near the center of the fire.

Hare who was cunning and did not lose his head in this great danger hid in a hole deep below the surface of the ground. But when the flames and smoke had rolled by he came out and tripped lightly over the hot ground.

Baboon for a moment was too astonished to speak. At last he said, "How did you escape? I was sure you were dead."

Hare, who enjoyed a joke, replied "I spat on the fire and put it out."

Baboon was surprised but so serious was the face of Hare that Baboon believed him.

This falsehood, told in fun, nearly caused the death of Baboon, for a few days later he was caught in a blaze from which he made no effort to escape. Remembering the words of Hare, foolish Baboon spat repeatedly at the blaze, until he was almost surrounded and hope of escape was nearly gone.

Just in time to save his life Baboon dashed from the flames and eagerly sought his friend Hare.

"You nearly murdered me," cried Baboon angrily.

For a moment Hare failed to understand. Then he felt sorry, "It was only a joke," he explained. "I did not think you would believe me."



HARE REFUSES TO DIG A WELL

IN MOST parts of Africa there are wet and dry seasons. In the wet season rain is accompanied by severe thunderstorms, but this period is followed by drought. Trees become dry and withered, grass is quickly lighted by heat from the sun, and the whole countryside seems dead. Animals travel many miles to water holes. There they find the dead bodies of creatures who have arrived too late to slake their thirst.

Under such unhappy conditions Lion called many animals, and explained that water might be found by digging deeply into the ground. "Men dig wells," he said, "surely we can do the same."

All the animals agreed that they would dance on one spot so that the ground would be worn into a deep hole. After a long time and some exceedingly hard work a little water was reached, then as they dug deeper a good supply came to the surface.

"I notice," growled Lion who was in charge of the work "that Hare has not helped us." And turning to Hare who had just arrived he said "You have not dug so you shall not drink." Hare replied "I do not want to drink your dirty water; I like fresh dew from the grass."

Said Hyena, "Hare tells a falsehood. He will come at night to drink, so I will guard the water hole."

When all was dark Hare drew near the hole bringing with him a gourd of honey, for he knew that some animal would be on watch.

Hyena accepted a little honey but still kept Hare from the water. The latter whispered, "Let me tie you, Hyena, and I will give you all the honey." To this Hyena agreed, but to his disgust Hare drank of the water, refused to give up the honey, and ran away laughing at his clever trick.

Hyena was far too ashamed to confess what had happened, so the trick remained a mystery to the other animals. After a long talk it was decided that Leopard should guard the water hole the next night. But to the surprise of every one Leopard was found tied in the morning. Of all the animals only Hyena understood that Hare had again played his trick.

Tortoise, who offered himself as a watchman, was offended with the laughter that greeted him, but at last he was allowed to be sentry for the night.

Tortoise, who is a good swimmer, entered the water and allowed himself to sink so that only the tip of his nose remained above water. Presently his patience was rewarded. The slim body of Hare appeared in the darkness. He looked care-

fully around, then failing to see a watchman, approached the water carelessly. At once Tortoise seized Hare by one of his paws and held tightly, until the noise of the scuffle brought the other animals and Hare was led away a prisoner.

At the trial next day Lion passed a sentence of death on Hare who wept and pleaded for his life. "Just let me dance once and sing my song," he asked. Permission was granted, so Hare began a wild dance on the most dusty patch of ground he could find. Faster he danced, and bigger grew the cloud of dust. Then with a sudden swerve Hare dashed from the screen of dust, and owing to his great speed was soon out of sight.



HARE IS PUNISHED BY ELEPHANT

ONE day Hare was sitting by the bank of a river wondering how he could get across. The water was deep and he was not a good swimmer. Fortunately Elephant, who was going to visit his chief, came by at that moment.

"Please carry me across, Strong Father," said Hare respectfully.

"Up on my back," said Elephant as he lifted the Hare with his trunk.

Elephant easily swam the swift, deep river and climbed the opposite bank with Hare safe and dry on his shoulders. Presently Hare noticed a bag tied round Elephant's neck so drew it toward him and put his paw inside. To his great delight he found that the bag contained delicious honey. So he helped himself until all the honey was gone. He then became frightened that Elephant would notice the difference in weight. What could he put in the bag? Some baboons who were passing by stopped to talk with Elephant. This gave Hare the opportunity to ask them for some stones, and soon after this Elephant arrived at the home of his chief. Hare was anxious to get away as soon as possible for he did not wish to see Elephant open the honey-bag. Hare scampered away as soon as Elephant had lifted him to the ground.

Elephant told his friends that he had brought a bag of honey as a present so all gathered eagerly to enjoy the feast. What a disappointment! The bag contained nothing but stones. Elephant had to explain that he gave Hare a ride on his back, and all agreed that Hare must have stolen the honey because Hare was known as a bad character.



Without loss of time Elephant went in search of Hare and at last caught sight of him feeding near a hole in the ground under the root of a tree. Hare was a little too quick for Elephant and just managed to slip into his home. Elephant pushed his trunk a long way into the hole and laid hold of Hare's leg, causing him great pain, but Hare said quite calmly, "I think you have got hold of a tree root."

Elephant let go and began searching around with his trunk in another direction. After some time Elephant curled his trunk round a root and began to pull as hard as he could, thinking that he had laid hold of Hare.

Hare called out, "You are killing me. Let go! Let go!"

This made Elephant pull all the harder as he tried to drag something out of the hole.

"This is the strongest Hare I ever met," said Elephant to himself as he put forth all his strength.

Meanwhile Hare was laughing to himself as he watched Elephant's trunk tugging at the strong root of the tree. But all this effort was in vain. Elephant went away greatly puzzled to think that Hare was too strong to be pulled out of the hole.

As Elephant walked along thinking the matter over he met Tortoise, walking slowly as usual. Apparently he was not in a hurry, so Elephant stopped to tell the story of the theft of the honey by Hare. Some time ago Hare had played a mean trick on Tortoise, so Elephant and Tortoise were both eager to punish Hare.

"Come with me," said Tortoise as he led the way to some sticky gum which was oozing from the trunk of a tree.

"Rub me all over with this," he said to Elephant, and in a few minutes Tortoise was smeared all over with the gum.

"Keep away for a time," whispered Tortoise as he set himself at the mouth of the hole where Hare was hiding.

As time passed and there was no sign of the Elephant's trunk in the hole Hare became bolder and ventured to the entrance. The sight of Tortoise did not alarm him at all.

"Get out of my way," said Hare very roughly, but Tortoise did not move.

Hare gave Tortoise a push with his paw which stuck fast in the gum.

"Let go," demanded Hare as he struck Tortoise with his free paw. This also stuck fast.

Then Hare kicked Tortoise with both back legs and these too stuck fast. It was useless for Hare to struggle and call Tortoise bad names. The more he struggled the faster he stuck to the gum. When Hare tried to bite Tortoise, his nose stuck fast.

Then Tortoise shouted to Elephant, "I have the thief who stole your honey."

"Hold him," said Elephant as he came on the scene.

Hare was quite helpless so Elephant gave him a sound beating before letting him go.



HARE AND HYENA

HARE, who was out of work, had wandered far in search of employment until he became tired and hungry. But at last, when about to lie down in despair, he was employed by Lion who told him to dry some meat by the fire. While busy with this task Hyena asked for a share of the meat.

"I cannot give you any," said Hare, "for the meat belongs to Lion, my master."

Hyena did not ask again but helped himself, leaving only a small supper for Lion. Naturally, Lion was very angry. He accused Hare of eating his supper and would not believe that Hyena had taken it. This happened several evenings until Hare was thoroughly angry.

"I will stop this," he said to himself.

All day long Hare worked at digging a deep pit in the bottom of which he placed a stick with the sharp point standing upward. He then went off to the forest to collect firewood. On returning from this task Hare looked eagerly into the pit hoping to find that Hyena had been caught. He was horrified to see that Lion, his good master, had been caught and killed.

For a time Hare was too sad and frightened to think, but at last a plan came to his mind. He stuffed the dead Lion with grass, stood him upright near some bushes, and tied a rope round his neck. Just as Hare expected, Hyena soon visited the camp to steal meat, so Hare pretended to be quite friendly. He took the free end of the rope which was fastened to the hidden Lion and said to Hyena, "You would look pretty with this around your neck as a necklace."

Hyena allowed Hare to fasten the rope in this way, and so long as he stood still nothing happened. Presently, when Hyena began to move about he pulled the stuffed Lion out of the bushes. He was so terrified that he ran around in circles and at last fell into the pit which had killed the Lion. Some other Hyenas were so scared that they too crowded into the pit and two of them were at once killed on the sharp stake.

The Hyenas had not the sense to see that Lion was tied at the end of a rope which was fastened to one of their number. Every time the Hyena moved the Lion moved, so they lay still trembling with fright. Now and then the Hyena with the rope round his neck ventured to the edge of the pit, but shrank back at once because Lion was still there. For several days this lasted until all the Hyenas were tired and starving. Then Hare came to the edge of the pit and told them about the trick he had played to punish them for stealing the meat of Lion.

When the Hyenas knew that the Lion was not alive they crept out one by one, but Hare was too far away to be caught.

HARE IS NEAR DEATH

HARE, who was looking into a clear pool, saw the sky, hills, and trees reflected in the water. He thought he was looking at a new country which he could reach and call his own by diving into the water. This idea made him quite bold because it seemed to give him a means of escaping from his enemies. Up to this time Hare had been rather timid but he now went into the forest and was quite rude to some Elephants. These chased him to the edge of the pond. Hare dived into the water, thinking that he would soon reach the beautiful country which he supposed to be at the bottom of the pond.

When Hare came to the top of the water one of the Elephants seized him with his trunk and drew him to the edge of the water.



"Shall I kill you?" snorted Elephant.

"No, no, please don't do that," said poor Hare, thoroughly frightened.

"Then I will beat you," bellowed Elephant.

"Oh, no, not that. I am so small," squeaked Hare.

"Then I will roll you in the mud," decided Elephant, and this he quickly did, leaving Hare at the edge of the pond looking like a ball of mud.

Hyena came along sniffing with his nose close to the ground. He could see nothing but mud and water, yet there seemed to be a smell of Hare.

Hyena turned the ball of mud with his nose, saying, "Yes, Hare is inside, but he is too dirty to eat. I must clean and dry him."

Hyena gave Hare a wash in the pond, then carried him to his den and laid him by the fire to dry. The warmth of the fire aroused Hare. For a long time he had been almost dead from the bad treatment he had received. Hare did not move. He just peeped out of the corner of one eye and saw Hyena watching him. The fire was growing hotter and hotter. Hare had been too cold but now he was uncomfortably hot, yet he dare not move. Hyena was growing impatient for his supper. He rose, sniffed, and walked toward Hare, who could lie still no longer. Hare was not strong but he was just able to jump up and run away.

After a day or two of rest and food, Hare felt well again. About this time he was employed by Lion to look after some Lion cubs and to teach them their lessons. Lion used to send meat to the cubs by Hare, ordering him to give the best meat to the children and to have the bones for himself. But Hare said, "Your father has sent some bones to make your teeth strong." Then he kept the meat for himself.

The Lion cubs were very rough in their play, so much so that the body of Hare was covered with scratches. Often he used to think how much happier he would be if he could get rid of the cubs, but Hare was afraid of Lion, their father. As time went by Hare made up his mind that he would teach the cubs a dangerous game, hoping that one of them would be killed. Hare dug a deep, wide pit and ordered the cubs to jump over it.

"Like this," he said, taking a leap over the hole, for Hare was a good jumper.

Two of the cubs jumped well, but the third fell into the pit and was killed. Hare was greatly alarmed when he heard the father Lion coming home, but a clever plan entered his mind.

"Show me the cubs," ordered Lion sharply.

Hare brought out number one, then took it back to the hole where the cubs slept.

"Show me another one," ordered Lion.

Hare brought out number two, and hoped the father would be satisfied.

But Lion said, "Now I will see the third cub."

Hare brought out the first cub once more, and the trick succeeded because the cubs were very much alike.

Next day Hare made the cubs play at the same game of jumping, and again there was an accident which caused the death of another cub. Hare was thor-

oughly frightened, but keeping his wits he played the same trick, except that he had to bring out one cub three times. On the following morning Hare ran away to the woods because he knew that sooner or later Lion would discover that only one cub was alive. Lion found out the truth that very evening, so at once set off in pursuit of Hare. Soon after sunrise Lion saw Hare sitting on a hillside among some rocks.

"I will have my revenge," said Lion as he climbed the hillside.

But Hare was too cunning to be caught. He pushed a rock and sent it rolling down on to Lion, who was instantly killed.

Hare tried to play a wicked trick on a small Antelope of whose horns he wanted to make trumpets.

Antelope said, "I am so cold."

Hare replied, "Get into this pot of warm water on the fire. You will soon be hot."

The foolish Antelope jumped into the pot, but no sooner had he done so than Hare fixed on the lid. Antelope kicked and struggled. The pot broke, and Antelope made a lucky escape.

There are some people who are always leading others into mischief, and Hare was never so happy as the day he persuaded Baboon to help him steal ground-nuts from other people's fields. After a pile of nuts had been collected Hare said, "Uncle Baboon, do not tire yourself with collecting nuts. Sit in the shade by the pile of nuts and I will do all the work."

Baboon thought this a good plan so sat under the shade of a large tree watching Hare do some more stealing.

Presently Hare sat behind Baboon, saying, "Let me comb your hair, Uncle Baboon."

Hare pretended to be busy with this task, but really he was digging a hole into which he put some sticky gum. In moving, Baboon slipped his leg into the hole and was held fast. Hare ran to a safe distance then shouted to the people whose fields had been robbed.

"Look! Look! There is the thief sitting by the pile of nuts."

Baboon struggled. The people drew nearer and nearer. Hare kept shouting and pointing at Baboon. Baboon fought hard to get free, but all in vain. He received a severe beating before the people allowed him to go.

Hare began to think himself so clever that no harm could possibly come to him. He found the jaw bone of an Elephant and planted it in the ground, saying to all the animals, "Come and see some big teeth growing out of the earth."

Round the jaw bone Hare built a big trap with a heavy door through which the animals had to pass as they went in to see the teeth growing out of the ground. Hare swung open the heavy door expecting to trap all the animals together while he escaped. But the great door swung too quickly for him and he was nearly caught between the door and the post. This warned the other animals of their danger and they chased Hare as he bounded away over the open country.

VII
THE MAN EATERS



VII

THE MAN EATERS

IN AFRICA there are many animals who live on flesh. These creatures of the cat and dog tribes do not as a rule live in the dense forests, but in thinly wooded areas and open plains. In country of this kind herds of antelope live, and on these lions and leopards prey. Sometimes lions run down their quarry in open chase, or they may lie in wait near waterholes.

All the large carnivorous (meat-eating) animals are active at night, but some of them prowl also in the day time. Wild dogs hunt in packs, but lions, leopards, and hyenas may be seen singly or in pairs. Lions, leopards, and wild dogs prefer to kill their prey, but hyenas and jackals feed on dead bodies. Sometimes hyenas and jackals lie near to the kill of a lion so that they may eat the bones and other fragments that are left.

In some Negro tribes the people have a lion or a leopard as a totem. The creature is then a badge for many men and women who speak of themselves as the lions or the leopards. In some tribes a man is not allowed to kill or eat his totem animal. This would bring bad luck, and often a person says that his totem animal is a friend who will help him.

In West Africa there used to be a secret society called the Leopard Society, which frightened those who were not members and caused them to pay heavy fines. Meetings of the society were held in the bush, and one of the members was dressed in a leopard skin. This human leopard was provided with claws, which he sometimes used to kill or injure those who would not join the society, or were disobedient to the rules.

Some natives, for example the Masai and Nandi of East Africa, kill lions by spearing them in open fight. Then the carcass is treated with respect while it is carried in a parade and a death chant is sung. Cattle keepers are anxious to kill lions because of their destruction of the herds, and a successful lion hunter is known by his headdress made from a lion's mane.

Hunters of other tribes make traps for leopards which are enticed into strong traps of poles, because they can see a goat tethered within. But the trap is so made that when the bait is touched a cord is released, and down comes the heavy door. The hunter then removes one or two poles, so making a slit through which he can shoot arrows or thrust his spears.

The actions of a leopard are imitated in games, and some curious beliefs are associated with lions. If a lion prowls round the wooden fence of a village by night a medicine-man talks to the beast from the inner side of the fence, asking why the prowler comes. People believe that the spirit of a dead man can enter a lion, and the animal will wander near the village until a sacrifice is made to the dead person.

At night, the Ovimbundu, who were great caravan travelers, placed a charm on the ground. The charm was made of a large horn filled with fat and charcoal which was made to smoulder. The smell was said to keep away thieves and wild beasts. Since the large carnivorous animals are dangerous to men and herds their habits are often talked about.

A GOOD LION AND A BAD ONE

HIDDEN in the depths of the jungle, from which they came every night in search of food, lived a fierce Lion and his two wives. One of these wives was good, but the other was said to have an evil nature. Strange to say Lion loved the bad wife better than the good one. Perhaps this was because the evil Lioness flattered him by saying, "How beautiful is your mane. What a wonderful deep roar you have. Your voice terrifies all the animals of the forest."

The good wife was badly treated, in fact she had to go to the drinking pools to catch her prey while the wicked Lioness enjoyed a big meal every time Lion caught an antelope or a buffalo. This was unkind because the good Lioness had a little son for whom she had to provide food every day. One day the mother left her little son in charge, telling him to cook the fish while she went hunting.

As she went away the mother lion called out, "Do not open the door to anyone."

Presently the father Lion returned and knocked loudly at the door, for he could smell the fish and was eager to devour it.

In his deep growling voice he roared, "Open the door."

To this angry demand the frightened little lion replied, "I dare not for my mother said I must keep it locked."

The smell of the fish was so tempting that the father Lion broke the lock, and rushing in quickly hooked the fish from the pot with a stick.



After he had eaten all of it he laughed and shouted, "Now what will you say to your mother?"

Not satisfied with his meal, the greedy father began to lick the inside of the cooking pot. But imagine his fright when the rim of the pot fit so closely round his neck that he could not shake it off. Up and down he ran, angry and frightened, calling out in tones which came from the depths of the pot. Meanwhile he shook himself and rubbed his body along the floor. As the good mother returned she heard these dreadful noises and was glad to see her little cub safe and sound. He was crouching in a corner nearly frightened to death by the anger of his father. The mother who had often been so badly treated took a stick and gave father Lion a good beating. Then, followed by her little cub, she ran away to make a new home. The wicked and greedy old Lion had to carry the pot on his head until his bad wife came home to set him free.





THE QUARREL BETWEEN LION AND BADGER

FOR a long time Badger and Lion had been very good friends until Hare came to live near them. It all happened in this way.

Lion said to Badger, "let us share our food. If I catch anything you shall have half, and if you should gather some honey, I will share it equally with you."

Badger agreed that each should divide all the food that he could get. This plan worked quite well until Hare became jealous of the friendship and played a trick to cause a quarrel between Lion and Badger.

One day Lion called to Badger, "Come over here and share my food."



Hare, who was hiding in the bushes, replied in a voice like the voice of Badger, "I do not want your food. You can eat it all by yourself."

Never had Lion been answered in that way. He could scarcely believe his own ears.

Next day Badger called to Lion, "Make haste. Come here and help me to eat the honey I have gathered."

Hare replied in a voice like that of Lion, "Eat your honey alone. I do not want any of it."

Badger felt very hurt and angry when he received such a curt reply.

When Lion and Badger met a day or two later each was angry with the other but gradually they both calmed down and talked the matter over. At last they agreed that somebody was playing a trick on them to cause a quarrel.

Lion said, "I feel sure that Hare knows something of this matter."

Badger replied, "I will watch him."

As Badger is a small animal it was agreed that he should hide himself in a hole near to the home of Hare.

Lion went to a distance then called loudly, "Badger, come and share my dinner."

Badger peeped out of his hole and distinctly saw and heard Hare reply, "Eat your dinner alone. I do not want any of it."

Hare had no idea that anyone was watching him so he was not afraid when Lion and Badger called to see him. After a short talk Hare was seized by Lion who threatened to dash him on the hard ground.



"Please do not do that," squeaked Hare piteously. "I was only having a joke. Throw me on the dust over there."

Lion took pity on him because he had already had a severe lesson.

"Very well," said Lion. "I will throw you in a soft place."

Lion carried Hare to the heap of dust and tossed him down none too gently. The dust flew up in a cloud which blinded Lion for a moment and in that time Hare had made his escape. But never again did he try to break the friendship between Lion and Badger.





THE FRIENDSHIP OF JACKAL AND LION

FOR many months before their quarrel Lion and Jackal had hunted together on good terms. No doubt they would have continued to be great friends but for the deceit of Jackal. Jackal knew that he was not so strong as the Lion so tried to be equal by playing cunning tricks.

The two animals agreed that if they killed a large animal it should belong to Lion, but if the animal were small Jackal should claim it. When a large Eland (an antelope) was killed Lion said, "This is mine. I will tear it to pieces, then you must carry these to my wife."

After the Lion had torn the meat and gone away Jackal carried all the food to his own wife, leaving nothing at all for Lion's family.

Jackal muttered to himself, "Does my friend Lion think that I am so stupid as to starve my own family?"

After some hard work Jackal had carried all the meat to the top of the high rock where his family lived.

To his great surprise and anger Lion reached home to find that Jackal had not brought home a single morsel of the meat.

"He has not been here at all," cried Mrs. Lion.

Immediately Lion set off for the home of Jackal where he waited beneath the rock.

Jackal had to come down to draw water, an act which nearly cost him his life. Lion came upon him so quickly that there was only just time to disappear into a hole at the root of a tree. Even so, the tail of Jackal was left outside the hole, so giving Lion a chance to seize it.

"I will pull off your tail," shouted Lion.

"Pull as hard as you please," retorted Jackal. "That is a tree root and not my tail."

Lion said, "I will get a stone to beat your tail," and while he was searching for a stone Jackal slipped out of the hole and made his way home. After that the life of Jackal was very exciting as he never knew exactly where Lion was likely to be hiding. Death was often near.

One day Lion met Jackal face to face and was about to spring on him when Jackal cried out, "Just look at that fine antelope over there."

As Lion glanced to one side Jackal made his escape, but the adventure left him nervous about the future. He knew that Lion had not forgotten his misdeeds.

Jackal was eager to attend a meeting of all the animals but was afraid that Lion might kill him. Mrs. Jackal suggested a good plan.

"Make yourself a pair of horns out of beeswax," she advised. "Then Lion will not know you."

Jackal did as he was told, and surely enough Lion appeared not to know him as the animals sat in their places. Presently Jackal became drowsy so fell asleep by the fire. As time went on his horns of wax melted so Lion said to himself, "Surely that is Jackal. Now I shall have him."

But Jackal wakened just in time to rush away under a rock. There was only just room for Jackal to creep in, so of course Lion could not follow him.

"The rock is falling on me. Get some wood to prop it up," pleaded Jackal.

"Yes, I will," said Lion, "for I do want to take you alive."

While Lion had gone for the wood Jackal slipped home.

Lion felt that he was not clever enough to kill Jackal so said, "Let us be friends," and the two went hunting again as before.

As they stood over the carcass of an animal that the Lion had killed, Jackal was told as before to take a good piece of meat to Mrs. Lion, while the bone was for his own family. Once more Jackal deceived Lion by giving the bone to Mrs. Lion and the meat to his own family.

"You were very stupid to trust Jackal again," was Mrs. Lion's reply when Lion arrived home.

Lion said not a word but went to the base of the high rock where Jackal lived. Jackal pretended to be friendly and let down a rope but it was almost cut through in the middle.

"Climb up, friend Lion," invited Jackal. "I have been wanting to see you."

When Lion had climbed half way up the rope, his weight caused it to snap and down he went with a great bump.

"Perhaps that will teach you to leave me alone," laughed Jackal.

"Some day I will get you," replied Lion as he went limping away planning a terrible revenge.

RAM AND LEOPARD

LEOPARD was returning home one morning after spending the night in the jungle when he saw a large Ram with beautiful horns. The Leopard had never before seen a Ram so approached cautiously and wished him good morning.

"And what might your name be?" asked Leopard politely.

Ram stamped his forefeet on the ground as he replied roughly, "My name is Ram. I am the father sheep."

Leopard was so afraid of the large horns that he ran off as fast as he could to tell the story to his friend Jackal.

"How stupid of you to be afraid of Ram," cried Jackal scornfully. "Ram is only a father sheep, and sheep are easily scared."

"Tomorrow," declared Jackal, "we will go together, kill and eat this Ram who frightens you so much."

Next evening Leopard and Jackal set off together to make good their wicked plan. As they crept stealthily through the bush Leopard kept remarking on the horns of Ram, but Jackal was braver because he had not seen Ram. As they drew near to Ram's home Leopard showed signs of turning back, for he was losing his courage. Jackal made a rope from some creepers and made this fast round his own body and that of the Leopard, saying as he did so, "Now we shall be obliged to travel together."



Jackal had forgotten that Leopard was the larger and stronger of the two. Tied together in this way they drew near to a place where the Ram and his sheep were bleating.

Ram could smell them a long way off so had his plans made for their defeat. When Leopard and Jackal were near, Ram could see that Leopard was half afraid, so pinching a lamb to make it bleat, Ram came forward, though he himself was really quite nervous.

"How very good of you to bring Leopard for food. My child the lamb is crying with hunger," shouted Ram to Jackal. Jackal was not afraid, but Leopard trembled when he heard those dreadful words, "How good of you to bring Leopard for food."

With a howl of fright Leopard turned and fled, dragging Jackal with him over the rough ground. It was too late for Jackal to untie the rope which fastened him to Leopard. He was dragged over hills and valleys, through swamps and thorny bushes until Leopard at last lay down thoroughly exhausted.

"Never again," said Jackal bitterly, "will I go hunting with such a coward."

LEOPARD AND ANTELOPE

LEOPARD is one of the most cruel of animals. He prowls about killing without mercy such gentle animals as the antelope. One day Leopard entered a village and killed a poor little dog, but as he was about to eat his prey the body of the dog turned into a maiden so lovely that Leopard wanted her for his wife.

The girl said, "I cannot marry you while you have such long sharp claws. You might scratch me."

"I will do anything to please you," said the Leopard as he hastened away to have his claws taken out. This hurt him very much, but he bore the pain well because he was thinking of the beautiful girl.

When next he met the girl Leopard asked, "Will you marry me now that I have had my claws taken out?"

"I cannot," said the maiden, "for I do not like your long teeth."

"If I have my teeth taken out, will you marry me?" asked Leopard.

"Yes," replied the girl, "because you cannot harm me then."

In a few days Leopard returned without teeth, and since his claws had been taken out as well he was quite harmless.

"Will you marry me now?" he asked.

To the great surprise of Leopard the girl turned suddenly into an Antelope which said, "You have hunted me and torn me. You have killed dogs, and even little children, but you are now so harmless that the other animals can punish you." With these words the Antelope bounded away and was soon out of sight.



MAN, LEOPARD, AND CROCODILE

A NATIVE of an African village was almost without food when he had a bright idea. "Leopard and Crocodile cannot climb trees. Perhaps they would like some palm nuts," he thought. So Man climbed a tree and threw down some clusters of nuts. These he gathered in a bag, then set off toward the river.

On meeting the Crocodile Man said, "Would you like to try some of these nuts?" This offer Crocodile gladly accepted. Crocodile promised that he would bring fish from the river if Man would gather nuts for him and in this way a bargain was made.

After traveling a little farther Man met a Leopard.

"Do you like palm nuts?" asked Man.

"I have never tasted them," replied Leopard.

"Then eat a few of these," was the invitation.

Leopard liked the nuts so much that he promised to bring meat for Man if he would gather nuts each day. Man readily agreed.

For many days the agreement was kept. Man gathered nuts for Leopard and Crocodile while they repaid him with fish and meat. After a time both animals became tired of eating nuts.

"Can you get a dog for me to eat?" asked Leopard, and Crocodile kept making the same request.

Man became so tired of their questions that he decided to get rid of both of them, for they are dangerous animals.

"Go to the river near the three palm trees and you will see a dog," advised Man when Crocodile worried him with questions.

Crocodile did as he was told, but went to sleep as there was no dog in sight. Soon after Crocodile had been sent to the river Leopard visited Man and asked, "Where can I find a dog to eat?"



"Go to the three palm trees near the river and you will find a dog," ordered Man.

Leopard arrived at the three palm trees just as Crocodile was rousing himself from sleep.

"This is the largest and fiercest dog I have seen," said Crocodile as his eyes rested on the form of Leopard.

But Crocodile was not afraid. He snapped viciously at Leopard and in a moment there was a fight so terrible that all the people came running from the village to see the battle.

Leopard clawed Crocodile without hurting his tough skin, and Crocodile lashed his tail and snapped his jaws without being able to grasp Leopard. For a long time the fight continued until the tired Crocodile retired to the river and Leopard was glad to take refuge in the forest.

JACKAL AND DOG

ALTHOUGH Jackal lived in wild hilly country, and Dog was a domestic animal of the village, they became close friends.

"How sad for you," remarked Dog, as they trotted side by side.

"Why so sad?" demanded Jackal, a trifle annoyed.

"I would not like to hunt for my food," replied Dog, "because I have bones given to me in the village."

"That I do not believe," Jackal made reply.

"Then come with me and prove the matter for yourself," invited Dog.

That night as the village fires were burning, Dog lay near to his master, while on the logs the pot was simmering.

A safe distance away sat thin Jackal, licking his chops and sniffing the air. He could see without coming into view. "I do not think Man will give my friend a bone," murmured Jackal to himself.

But in this he was mistaken, for after the meal was finished one of the men tossed a bone which Dog caught with a yelp of pleasure. As Jackal turned and disappeared to his hunting grounds, where he might run and watch all night without catching anything, he grumbled at his misfortune in being born a Jackal and not a Dog.

The temper of Jackal was not more pleasant next morning when Dog recalled the events of the evening.

"I suppose you don't have a bone every night," peevishly snapped Jackal.

"Indeed I do," snarled the Dog. "If you do not believe me watch again tonight."

Once more Jackal waited, hoping to prove that Dog had told a falsehood. Presently Dog, who was running about the fire, knocked over a wooden milk pail. Up jumped the owner of the milk and gave Dog a beating.

Quietly Jackal slunk off into the night, saying to himself, "Although I never have a bone given to me I am not beaten. Perhaps I am not so badly off as I thought."



VIII
THE LITTLE ANIMALS



VIII

THE LITTLE ANIMALS

JUDGING from the stories already told it might be thought that only large animals are important, yet many small creatures take their place in folklore tales. A traveler would never suspect the number of little creatures that hide in the grass, inhabit holes in the ground, or shelter in cracks in the rock. But when a fire occurs, as it often does in the dry season, rats, mice, lizards, and many smaller creatures such as grasshoppers may be seen running from the flames and smoke.

With these small creatures boys become acquainted at an early age, since they set traps for the rats and mice, which are thoroughly enjoyed, whether boiled or roasted.

Three boys asked me to dinner, and as we sat talking I took a peep in the pot, but to my dismay I saw that the meal was to consist of boiled rats. These were simmering in the pot with their tails and whiskers all complete so that nothing might be lost. I gnawed a piece of sugar cane, and ate some manioc which is like raw potato, but luckily escaped the course of rats. I pointed out that, as there were three little boys and only three rats, I would not have one, since the proper share was one rat for each boy.

Locusts, like large grasshoppers, visit many parts of Africa in clouds that cover the sky. These pests eat every green leaf and blade of grass in a few hours, so bringing famine and ruin. The natives collect the locusts, eat some at once after roasting them on the hot embers of the fire, but preserve the rest in salt and butter for future use. Even caterpillars are used as food by some tribes.

So in one way and another, while gathering plants for food and medicine, setting small traps, or watching a fire, people learn the habits of spiders, caterpillars, frogs, lizards, and other small creatures who are sometimes the chief performers in amusing stories.





THIEVING SPIDER

SPIDER was not really a thief before he learned evil ways from a bad companion, Antelope, who visited the woods every day to steal eggs from the birds.

Antelope gladly showed Spider where the eggs were to be found, then left him to take care of himself. But a sorry plight he got into through being caught in the strong beak of a Bird. Spider had robbed the nests many times, but though careful at first he soon became bolder, and at last quite forgot all caution. He felt sorry for his foolishness as he struggled in the strong beak of the Bird who said, "What are you doing in my nest?"

"I was only looking around," offered Spider as an excuse.

"Then I will burn you," retorted Bird angrily.

Although so frightened Spider was able to say, "If you burn me, your little birds will die."

This was an empty boast, but the parent Bird was afraid of the threat and said, "Then I will shoot you instead of burning you."

"If you shoot me your little birds will die," replied Spider, now growing bolder as he saw the effect his words were having on Bird.

"Very well, I cannot burn or shoot you, but I will drown you," said Bird.

Then, as Spider made no more threats, Bird placed him on a leaf and set him adrift on the swiftly flowing river.

Spider was amused when Bird said, "I will make your punishment a bad one. The leaf will sink slowly and your death will come little by little," for Spider could see that the leaf was strong enough to bear his weight for a long time.

As the leaf swirled down the river, now racing along, or spinning in a whirlpool, Spider thought many times that his end was near. He was wet and frightened but held onto the leaf with all his might because this was his only chance of escaping death. Never had Spider been so glad of all his legs. These held him fast on the leaf.

Gradually the river became a gently flowing stream, and Spider noticed that he was sailing through almost flat country. No longer was he racing down a steep hillside. Nearer and nearer to the bank the leaf drifted, until Spider was able to jump ashore, thoroughly frightened and willing to promise that he would never be a thief again.

GREEDY SPIDER

IN THE village where Spider lived with his wife and three children there was a famine. No food remained and the people had nothing but water to drink.

Spider grumbled more than anyone, but one day had the good sense to set out with a bag on his shoulder to look for food. By and by Spider noticed a large palm tree growing near to a river. Quickly he climbed the trunk and began to gather nuts from the top. As he was filling the bag, some of the nuts fell in the water, and as Spider did not wish to waste any food he dived into the water and began swimming toward the bottom.

Down and down he went until at last he came to a small house under the water, which was guarded by a fierce-looking man.

"What are you doing here?" demanded the Man roughly.

"I am looking for the nuts I dropped," said Spider in a voice shaking with fear.

"You must have been very short of food to trouble about a few nuts," said Man in a more kindly voice.

Then Spider told of the famine, his own hunger, and the distress of his wife and children.

Man listened attentively, then said, "Take these two pots, carry them carefully home, set them down in the house and say, 'Let me see what you can do,' but on no account may you say these words or set the pots down before you arrive home."

Spider thanked Man most heartily, then set off on his homeward journey fully intending to obey the orders. But before he was half way home Spider's curiosity was too much for him.

He set both pots on the ground and said, "Let me see what you can do."



To his great surprise both pots instantly became filled with the most delicious food. His first thought was to carry the food home to his wife and children without eating a morsel, but this good intention soon gave way to greediness.

"The pots are very heavy and there is no harm in having just a taste," he said to himself.

One taste led to another. He had been hungry for such a long time and the food was so good that he finished the lot. After that he felt much ashamed of his greediness. There remained nothing but the nuts gathered from the tree. These he took home, and how quickly they disappeared! Nothing was left for the future. Two days passed by, two long days of hunger and longing for food. At last Spider set off once more with the empty foodbag on his shoulder. He wanted to visit Man who had given him the food pots but was half afraid to do so.

"He may have found out that I ate the food and took none of it home," thought Spider uneasily.

When Spider came to the river he dived in at the same place as before and was soon in the presence of Man who had helped him. Spider thought that Man looked angry, but Spider was nervous about his own misdeeds so perhaps he imagined this.

"This time, said Man, "I will give you a whip. Take it with you. Do not lay it down until you get home. Then say to the whip, 'Now let me see what you can do.'"

On this occasion Spider was most obedient. He carried the whip home, laid it on the floor, and repeated the words just as he had been instructed.

"Let me see what you can do," shouted Spider, expecting that the whip would turn into food.

The whip did indeed let Spider see what it could do. For a moment Spider was too surprised to run away. Then he ran round and round the room with the whip chasing him and giving him a sound thrashing for his greediness and dishonesty.





BRAVERY OF CATERPILLAR



ON RETURNING to his burrow in the ground Hare noticed some marks at the entrance to the hole. He was quite puzzled with these and could not think who was inside his home.

Hare called loudly, "Who is in my house?"

Caterpillar was much afraid but keeping his wits he shouted, "I am a warrior who has killed Rhinoceros and Elephant."

Hare said to himself, "I am a small animal. How can I fight against one who has killed a Rhinoceros and an Elephant?" So Hare ran away and did not stop until he met Jackal, who looks like a fox.

Jackal was persuaded to come back to the home of Hare to find out who was there. In reply to the question, "Who is in the hole?" Caterpillar again said that he was a man who had killed all the big animals, whereupon Jackal and Hare both fled for their lives.

After traveling some distance they met Leopard who was well known for his ferocity. Leopard grunted at the hole and demanded that the intruder should come out, but Caterpillar again said that he was a great fighter and one who had even killed a Lion. This sent Leopard, Jackal, and Hare running as hard as they could go.

Presently they were stopped by Elephant who wanted to know why the three of them were running so fast. All felt very brave as they returned to the hole taking Elephant along with them. The voice of Elephant terrified the poor Caterpillar, but he steadied his voice and answered bravely, "Elephant, I have killed bigger Elephants than you." The Elephant was no braver than the others, so all ran away to the side of a stream where they sat and wondered who the great warrior could be.

As they were talking, Frog came up out of the river and offered to go with them to Hare's hole. All laughed at Frog because he is not a fighter, but he boldly entered the hole and came out with Caterpillar in his mouth. Frog would have eaten Caterpillar, but the others were so amused at the joke that they allowed Caterpillar to crawl away.

CHAMELEON HAS AN ADVENTURE

THE people of one African village say that Elephant is afraid of Chameleon, a small animal something like a lizard. Chameleon, it is true, can change his color at short notice, so that he readily turns from green to brown; he has great wobbling eyes, and a long tongue; but these are not the cause of Elephant's fear.

The story says that Elephant on meeting Chameleon in the forest said, "Why do you walk so slowly?"

For a time there was no answer, but at last Chameleon found his voice and boasted, "I am so strong that I have to walk slowly, looking carefully to see that the ground is able to support me."

"That is ridiculous," declared Elephant. "I don't have to walk in that way, though I am a very heavy animal."

"If you do not believe me, let us make a test of our weight and strength," invited Chameleon.

Loudly laughed Elephant, though he agreed to meet Chameleon the following morning at a place in the forest.

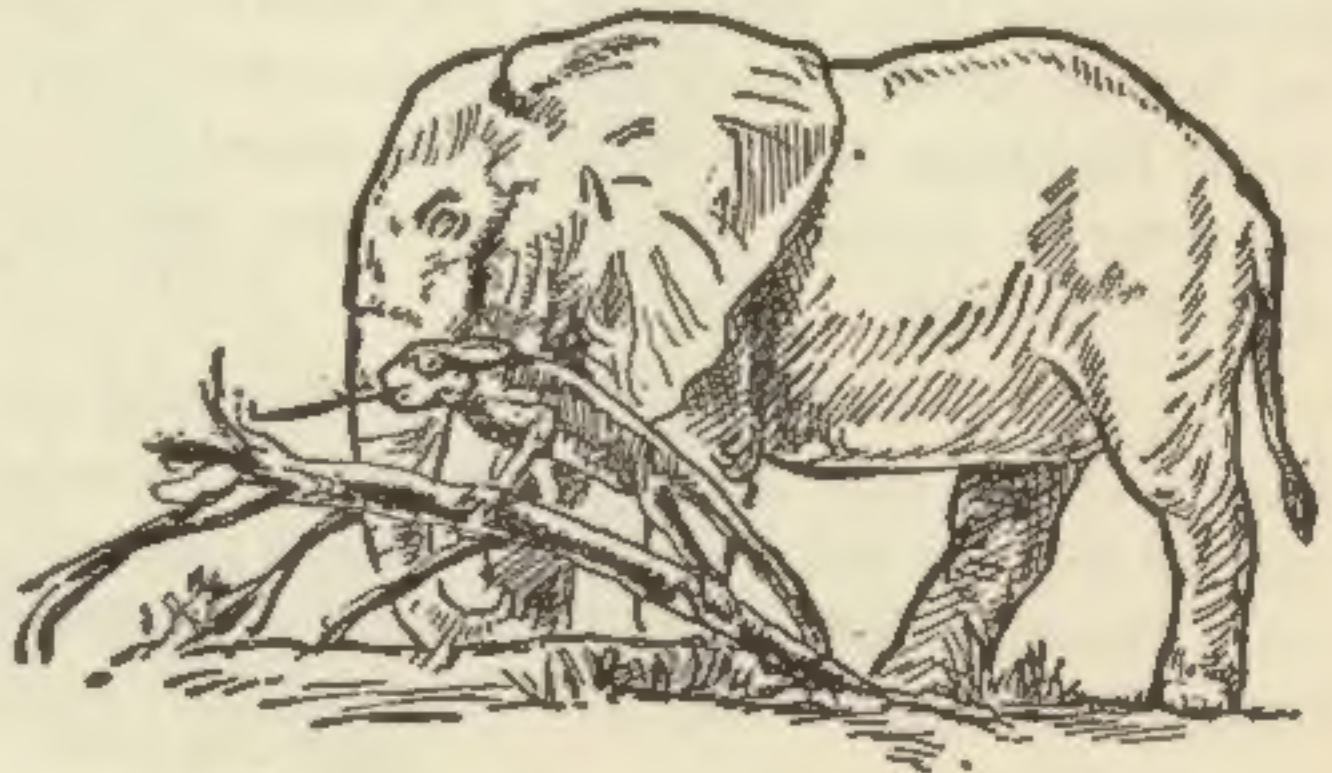
Early in the morning Chameleon arrived at the spot and dug a deep hole. This he carefully covered with leaves and fine earth which looked just like the ordinary ground.

When Elephant arrived Chameleon said, "If you are strong, jump into the air and fall into the earth at this place."

To try such a thing would be foolish, for that is hard ground," replied Elephant.

"Then I will do it," declared Chameleon.

So saying, he jumped into the air, came down on the leaves, and fell into the pit just as if he had crashed into the ground. Elephant was so surprised that he ran away and spread the story of the strength and weight of Chameleon.



LIZARD IS PUNISHED

IN THE cool of early morning Baboon was busy as usual searching for breakfast by digging up roots, nibbling fruits, and turning stones to find what was underneath.

Suddenly he came to a stone which was holding a large lizard by the tail. Moved by the entreaties of the captive, Baboon lifted the stone and set Lizard free.

To his great surprise, Lizard, instead of expressing thanks and gratitude, began to attack him, saying, "You moved the stone so roughly that the skin has come off my tail. I would have been better without your help." Not satisfied with this ungrateful speech Lizard began to bite Baboon, who explained that he had tried to perform a kind action.

When the quarrel was at its height, up came Hare, who asked, "Why all this noise?"

Baboon told of the sad plight of Lizard, then the latter complained that Baboon had been very careless in setting him free. "Look at my tail," cried Lizard, as he held it up for Hare's inspection.



Hare soon made up his mind what to do when the animals asked him to judge the case, but he pretended to be very slow of understanding.

"Now let me see," said Hare slowly. "Your tail was under this stone."

"Yes," agreed Lizard readily.

"But still I do not quite understand," continued Hare, as he lifted one edge of the stone. "Just show me exactly."

The Lizard quickly did as he was asked, placing his tail under the stone.

"And you were better off with your tail fast?" asked Hare.

"Yes, because the Baboon hurt me in lifting the stone," answered ungrateful Lizard.

"Then stay as you were before," replied Hare quickly, as he dropped the stone on the Lizard's tail.

Baboon and Hare walked off together, leaving Lizard to wriggle free as best he could.

"Perhaps he will be more thankful when someone else sets him free," remarked Hare.